ABRAHAM:

A STUDY IN ANCIENT JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

by

James Raymond Lord

Program of Graduate Studies in Religion
Duke University

Date: August 19, 1968

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Program of Graduate
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Both the Jewish and Christian faiths claim the establishment of a relationship between God and Abraham as a theological datum which informs their own-self-understanding. The interpretation of this relationship develops and is given varying emphases according to the particular historical and theological experiences of the religious communities. This study is an examination of the interpretation of the Abraham tradition within the literature of Judaism and Christianity from the pre-literary period through the end of the Second Jewish Revolt in 135 A. D. Through a critical examination of the history of this tradition, an attempt is made to demonstrate the relationship of theological purpose and historical experience to exegesis.

Chapter I is an examination of the Abraham tradition in the Hebrew Scriptures. After an analysis of the pre-literary tradition, the interpretations of the Yahwist-Elohist epic, the pre-exilic prophets, the Deuteronomists, the Priestly writers,

the post-exilic prophets, the Chronicler, and the Psalms are investigated. In this body of literature the major impact of the Babylonian Exile in accenting the motif of unmerited grace in the Abraham tradition is seen.

Chapter II is a consideration of the intertestamental Jewish literary tradition concerning Abraham. In this chapter major attention is given to the consequences of the Jewish encounter with Hellenism on this tradition. For analysis the documents are divided into four major groups: General Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Literature, Hellenistic Jewish Literature, and Rabbinic Literature. Within the General Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha the material is further divided historically with the pre-Maccabean documents and those coming from the late first century A. D. considered separately. The development of a considerable interest in Abraham's life and piety and the emergence of Isaac as a religious hero are matters of major significance.

Chapter III is an analysis of the Abraham tradition in the Gospels and Acts. This is basically a study of the interpretation of the Abraham tradition by Luke and the writer of the Fourth Gospel. In these writings the experience of Jesus as the Christ is interpreted as the fulfillment of the ancient patriarchal tradition. In each case both the place of the Abraham tradition within the writer's total theological perspective and the Jewish exegetical traditions with which he has affinities are demonstrated.

The analysis of this literature shows that the interpretation of the Abraham tradition by Jewish and Christian thinkers in various circles of piety within the historical period under consideration mirrors the major existential realities of the interpreters. The ancient store of tradition with its variety of motifs is refracted in changing situations to undergird the central philosophical and religious convictions of those who claim a relationship to Abraham.

PREFACE

This study is the result of a long-standing interest in the history of tradition and a dissatisfaction with generalized summaries of bodies of literature which fail to reflect the varieties of religious thought in a particular historical period. Teachers at Princeton and Duke have sharpened my sensitivity to these matters. The place of Abraham in the monotheistic religions of the world makes the traditions concerning him particularly fruitful for research. While this study is limited, I hope in the future to extend the investigation to the remainder of the New Testament documents and early patristic literature.

I wish to express my appreciation to my director, Dr. James L. Price, and to the other members of my committee for their counsel and advice in the preparation of this dissertation. I particularly wish to thank Dr. William F. Stinespring, who, on the day in which he participated in my ordination, first encouraged me to undertake graduate study at Duke.

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ABRAHAM:
A STUDY IN ANCIENT JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

Religious tradition within a living community of faith is subject to continuing reflection and modification. Any particular tradition is best understood in light of its own historical development. This dissertation is an examination of the tradition concerning Abraham the Hebrew within the faith of Israel and of primitive Christianity. Through analysis of the history of the tradition an attempt is made to demonstrate the relationship of theological purpose and historical situation to interpretation of tradition.

This study is basically a study of the history of a tradition. It is based largely upon a study of the primary source materials within their own historical and religious settings. Indeed a major purpose in the study is simply the collection of the Abraham references in the extensive literature under consideration. The study begins with the origin of the Abraham tradition in the pre-literary period of Israel's history and traces the developments up until the conclusion of the Second Jewish Revolt in 135 A. D.

Chapter I is a study of the Abraham tradition in the Hebrew Scriptures. The analysis begins with a consideration of the pre-literary tradition of the God of the Fathers. Then the presentation of Abraham in the combined Yahwist-Elohist epic is examined. In this section particular attention is given to the Abrahamic covenant, the Melchizedek episode, and the binding of Isaac. The interpretations of the pre-exilic prophets and the Deuteronomists are then discussed. Finally the understanding of the Priestly writers, the post-exilic prophets, the Chronicler, and the Psalms are examined.

Chapter II is a consideration of the intertestamental Jewish traditions concerning Abraham. The documents are divided into four major groups: General Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (i.e., documents which appear to have been circulated both in Palestine and the Diaspora); Literature of the Qumran Community; Hellenistic Jewish Literature; and Rabbinic Literature. Within the first of these groups of documents a historical division is made between the pre-Maccabean works, those coming from the Maccabean period through the end of the Jewish War in 70 A. D., and those coming from the end of the first century A. D. The Qumran literature is discussed through an analysis of certain scrolls related specifically to the Abraham narratives in Genesis, as well as through a consideration of the Qumran understanding of the Abrahamic covenant. Within the collection of Hellenistic Jewish literature primary attention is focused on the writings of Philo, while consideration is given also to fragments from early writers, the Wisdom of Solomon, II, III, and IV Maccabees, and the writings of Josephus. Within the rabbinic tradition the interpretations of Abraham in the various targums to the Pentateuch are first discussed. Then the traditions found in the Mishnah, the Talmuds, the Midrashes, and other literature are analyzed.

Chapter III is a study of the significance of Abraham in a particular type of early Christian literature. The Abraham tradition as it appears in the Gospels and Acts is analyzed here. This is basically a study of the interpretation by Luke and the author of the Fourth Gospel. Luke's interest in Abraham is more extensive than that of the other synoptic writers. His works include much special material in which there are references to Abraham and allusions to the Abraham narratives, and he also includes all of the very few Abraham references which are found in Matthew and Mark. Where parallel materials are found in other synoptic gospels, Luke's treatment will be compared with that of the other writers. The major concern in the discussion of the Lucan materials and the Fourth Gospel is to discover the meaning of Abraham within the total framework of the author's theology. In both cases an attempt will be made to demonstrate the exegetical traditions which most closely inform the writer's development of the Abraham tradition, as well as the divergence from earlier and contemporary Jewish understandings.

Since this dissertation surveys a vast body of primary source materials, the use of secondary materials must of necessity be representative and in no sense exhaustive. In the case of Biblical materials the original language sources are used. For other materials the texts in the original languages are used whenever practical. On matters of authorship, dating, provenance, certain textual problems, etc., it is necessary normally to follow a consensus of responsible scholarly opinion. It is recognized that in many cases certain critical questions are still under lively discussion in scholarly circles. The following of all of the intricacies of these discussions is impossible, however, within the purpose of this study.

The standard editions of primary sources used in the particular sections of the dissertation are noted there. The following editions of the Biblical texts have been used:

Kittel, Rudolf (ed.). *Biblia Hebraica*. Editio nona emendata. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1954.

Nestle, D. Eberhard (ed.). *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Editio vicesima prima. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1952.

Rahlfs, Alfred (ed.). *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes*. 2 vols. Editio septima. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1962.

CHAPTER I

THE ABRAHAM TRADITION IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

In order to understand the development of the Abraham tradition within Judaism and Christianity it is necessary at the outset to attempt to recover the origins of the tradition in the earliest period of Israel's history. With the use of the basic approaches and insights of historical-critical investigation it will then be possible to ascertain the varying interpretations given to this tradition by the successive generations of Israel's interpreters. This chapter will examine first the pre-literary Abraham tradition. Then it will analyze the major complexes of literature from the period of the early monarchy through the post-exilic age with reference to the treatment of the Abraham tradition.

Within the pre-exilic period major attention will be given to Abraham in the combined Yahwist-Elohist epic ca. 700 B. C. In most cases it is not significant to the thesis of this study to distinguish between Yahwist and Elohist traditions within the combined epic. Rather, except where particularly noted, the epic tradition of JE (along with any other possible pre-Deuteronomic sources) will be considered as a unity at that historical point where the two rescensions had been combined. Within the pre-exilic period the Deuteronomic Abrahamic tradition will next be examined. Both Deuteronomy and the books of the Former Prophets will be included here, assuming that the Deuteronomic History was virtually completed before the exile.[1] The third aspect of the pre-exilic Abraham tradition to be discussed is the possible references to and notable absences of this tradition in the classical pre-exilic prophets.

The crisis of the destruction of the state by the Babylonians and of the exile of the people affected profoundly the transmission and interpretation of ancient tradition. New needs led to an existential refraction of the ancient tradition, and within this new situation the Abraham tradition played a significant role. Of major importance is the interpretation of the Abraham tradition by the Priestly writers of the exile in their revision of the earlier epic tradition, shaping earlier tradition in such a way as to leave the finished Torah with their theological stamp. In this section of the study the place of Abraham in exilic and post-exilic prophetic teaching will be examined not only in the explicit references to Abraham, but also in the way in which the Abraham tradition may have informed the universalist dimension of post-exilic prophecy. The work of the Chronicler will then be examined with reference to the Abraham tradition. This midrashic retelling of the ancient tradition is very important not only as an expression of post-exilic theology, but also because it set the pattern for several later "Biblical histories" such as Jubilees and that of Pseudo-Philo.

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[1] Bernhard Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (2nd ed. rev.; Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 382.

Finally the Abraham tradition in the Psalms will be examined. Because of the virtual impossibility of accurate dating of a large number of psalms, this use of the Abraham tradition will be handled separately. Only tentative conclusions can be made concerning the placement of this tradition in the Psalms within the overall historical development of the Abraham tradition within the entire Hebrew Scriptures.

The Pre-literary Abraham Tradition

Gerhard von Rad has warned: "We should not underestimate the heritage contained in the pre-Jahwistic cult of the ancestors and its function in later Jahwism."[1] The classic study of the origins of this patriarchal religious tradition remains Albrecht Alt's 1929 essay, "The God of the Fathers."[2] Alt's point of departure in his study is the bringing together of the patriarchal tradition and the Moses tradition in Exodus 3, which conjunction he suggests is hardly likely to have been the free invention of the Elohist. Rather it points to an ancient form of the faith of Israel's ancestors which he insists is authentic historically.

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[1] Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, tr. D. M. G. Stalker (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), I, 7.

[2] Albrecht Alt, "The God of the Fathers," Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, tr. R. A. Wilson (Oxford Basil Blackwell, 1966), pp. 1-77. This essay was originally published as Der Gott der Väter, ("Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament." III Folge, Heft 12, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1929).

> For it is not usual for Israelite historians to develop their theories without any reference to factors supplied by tradition; their procedure is normally to isolate from the traditional material current at the time the single features that seem particularly important to them at the expense of others and to make these chosen elements express their own views.[1]

In his examination of the "God of the Fathers" tradition Alt suggests that this represents a quite different kind of religion from that of the ʾ*elim* of the Palestinian sanctuaries. The ʾ*elim* were localized to specific sanctuaries, whereas the God of the Fathers represents a continuous connection with a group of people. It was this aspect and distinctiveness which Alt suggests the Yahwist and Elohist found in the pre-literary tradition and found very important for showing a unity behind the profusion of patriarchal stories.[2] No doubt, as von Rad agrees, the groups worshipping the God of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac, and the Strong One of Jacob were originally distinct from one another.[3] These cults were then described as belonging to different generations of ~~the~~ same family, and then they were finally reduced to a single formula of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[1] Alt indicates that the authors of the Israelite sagas saw in this type of religion the characteristic and distinctive religion of their peoples' ancestors, a religion in which only tribes closely related to them took part and not other Palestinian inhabitants or other nations.[2]

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[1] Alt, pp. 13-14.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 23.

[3] von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, 8.

According to Alt's thesis the individual sagas arose before the conquest of Canaan; and after the entrance into Palestine in the conquest the God of the Fathers appropriated the sanctuaries and revelations of the Palestinian sanctuaries.[3] He suggests that even after the conquest the figures of the three patriarchs and their cults stood, on the whole, in separate sites and districts, although the attraction of a few major sanctuaries even for distant worshippers caused a certain amount of overlapping and interchange. The incorporation of these figures into a single genealogy was simply the consummation of the process.[4] The cult of the God of the Fathers with whom the patriarchal sagas are associated was then finally, according to Alt, overlaid with the newest element of the national faith in Yahweh, which assimilated the cult of the God of the Fathers which had for a time existed alongside it.[5]

This position, however, has not gone without criticism.

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[1] Alt, p. 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

Perhaps the most persuasive is that of Frank M. Cross, Jr., in his article, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs."[1] Cross argues that a fundamental weakness in Alt's position is his failure to examine the so-called "ʾ*el* religion" and his placing of the contact between this religion and the cult of the God of the Fathers at the time of the entry into Canaan in "Israelite times."[2]

> We should not deny that Alt performed an extremely significant work in distinguishing a special type of deity among the multitude of tutelary gods of nations, dynasties, classes, and persons represented in Near Eastern texts. We doubt that the Patriarchal god was typically nameless except for designation by the eponymn of the clan and/or his cult founder. Insofar as these Patriarchal deities belong to a pastoral or migrant folk, no doubt they were "foreign" or imported, ancestral gods rather than the gods of popular sanctuaries in the lands of Patriarchal sojournings. However, there seems to be no reason to doubt in view of our evidence that these clan or "social" gods were high gods and were quickly identified by common traits with the gods worshipped under various liturgical titles in sanctuaries in the new land; in the case of Israel, with a Canaanite high god or gods.[3]

Cross examines the extrabiblical evidence and establishes that at least three liturgical epithets in the Patriarchal narratives connect the Patriarchs with the cult of the Canaanite ʾEl: ʾEl, god of Israel-Jacob (Shechem); ʾEl-ʿOlam (Beersheba); and ʾEl [ʿElyon], Creator of Heaven and Earth (Jerusalem).[4]

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[1] Frank M. Cross, Jr., "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *The Harvard Theological Review,* LV (1962), 225-259.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 226.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 231-232.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 244.

He suggests that Šaddai (e.g., Gen. 49:25) is either an old Amorite deity who was early identified by the Fathers with Canaanite ʾEl or was another epithet of Canaanite ʾEl in its original setting.[1] He further suggests that Yahweh was originally a cultic name of ʾEl, evidently splitting off from ʾEl and ousting him.[2] He points out that this position solves a number of problems such as the fact of the continued stability of ʾEl, ʿElyon, Šaddai, and ʿOlam as names for Yahweh despite opposition to Ba'al and the puzzling features of the cult and sin of Jeroboam.[3] Thus while accepting the fact of certain special features in the cult of the God of the Fathers (as pointed out by Alt) and assimilation with Canaanite shrines and divine names, Cross argues that this took place much earlier and was related directly to the origins of Yahwism itself.

Ronald E. Clements also gives attention to the cult of the God of Abraham in his significant study of the origin of the Abrahamic covenant. In his Abraham and David he argues against Alt's position so far as it affects the Genesis 15 story. Clements argues that the ancient god of the shrine of Mamre (which he regards as the setting of Gen. 15) was believed to have made a covenant with Abraham, who had settled in the territory belonging to this god. This Mamre deity was some form of the high god ʾEl.[1] The covenant promised territory around Hebron to the patriarch and it is plausible that the 'El deity of Mamre was ʾEl Shaddai.[2] He points out that the weight of evidence favors the view that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were directly associated with the settled land and that the Old Testament tradition is wholly correct in associating them with the ʾElim of Canaan.[3] In the future development of the tradition the Calebites settled in the same area, took over this tradition which was joined with the Yahweh cult introduced by Caleb, and then the Abraham tradition became part of the heritage of the clan union of the great tribe of Judah.[4] Through Judah then this heritage was passed on and became part of the common stock of the nation's traditions. This last development took place at the time of the Davidic-Solomonic empire.[5] According to Clements this accounts for the close relationship between the Davidic and Abrahamic covenant traditions and their mutually influencing each other.[6] Within this development the royal covenant made the place shift from Hebron to Jerusalem and subsumed the Abrahamic covenant into the royal covenant.[7] There are evidences further that the court and monarchy were largely responsible for the preservation of the Abrahamic covenant tradition.[1] This analysis then suggests important modifications which should be made in the classic position of Alt and at the same time raises issues which must be explained in the exegesis of particular passages.

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[1] Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," The Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 250.

[2] Ibid., 256-257.

[3] Ibid., 257-258. John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing ("Studies in Biblical Theology," No. 19; London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1956), further criticizes the presuppositions and perspective of the "Alt-Noth" school, though his polemic is primarily against Noth.

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[1] Ronald E. Clements, Abraham and David ("Studies in Biblical Theology," Second Series, No. 5; London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1967), p. 27.

[2] Ibid., p. 29.

[3] Ibid., p. 30.

[4] Ibid., pp. 39, 45.

[5] Ibid., p. 46.

[6] Ibid., p. 55.

[7] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

While it is not possible or necessary to examine each incident in the Abraham cycle of stories with reference to its pre-literary form, an analysis of this stage of the tradition is very important at certain crucial points. This is important especially when considering such matters as doublets in the tradition and the peculiarities of Gen. 14. As Herman Gunkel has pointed out, the popular legends were by their very nature individual legends, and even when later poets or compilers have joined them, it is not difficult in most cases to extricate the original constituent elements. The practical exegetical conclusion which he suggests is that, first of all, each individual story must be interpreted from within.[2] It is important to observe, however, at the same time that compilers of written tradition in Israel did not always eliminate contradictory statements, but allowed them to exist alongside one another. This fact gives rise legitimately to the use of Biblical prooftexts in later periods for disparate theological points of view.

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[1] Clements, p. 64.

[2] Hermann Gunkel, The Legends of Genesis, tr. W. H. Carruth (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1964), pp. 43-45. This work is the opening section of Gunkel's 1901 commentary on Genesis.

The Abraham Tradition in the Combined Yahwist-Elohist Epic

Gunkel has observed: "The religion of Abraham is in reality the religion of the narrators of the legends, ascribed by them to Abraham."[1] By identifying and removing the Priestly and Deuteronomic portions of the Pentateuch it is possible to see the form of the Israelite epic as it existed in its combined edition shortly after the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians. The standard works of Eissfeldt and Pfeiffer are the principal critical sources for distinguishing the component traditions within the Pentateuch.[2]

It is generally recognized that the Yahwist epic reflects a time of nationalistic optimism in the period of the united kingdom during its greatest days of splendor and power, and that the Elohist tradition is an expression of the nationalism of the northern kingdom (either in the time of Jeroboam I or Jeroboam II).[3] The combining of these two traditions into a single epic can naturally be expected to reflect this nationalistic mood, but it seems that preference is given in the work to the Yahwist tradition. Any inferences relating to the

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1. Gunkel, p. 122.

2. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd from third German edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 188-189; 199-201; 194-195. R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 130-133; 143-144; 160; 168-171; 188-190.

3. Anderson, pp. 161, 166, 230.

Davidic dynasty could be expected to be retained by those who in Judah combined the two epic traditions.

The Abraham tradition in the JE epic is a continuous story of the proto-patriarch, built doubtlessly upon earlier disconnected stories. It is important to look first at the development of the story as a whole in its JE form and then to single out a number of the more significant episodes and motifs, particularly those which would receive exegetical treatment of some importance in later Jewish and Christian tradition.

In Genesis 11 the Mesopotamian setting of Abraham is provided, and Abraham's marriage to Sarah and her barrenness are noted.[1] This follows immediately upon the Tower of Babel story which ends with an unknown future for sinful man, now divided into separate language groups. For the Yahwist the Abraham tradition provides a solution for the welfare of mankind through the elect people. After the introduction of Abraham into the narrative he is commanded to leave for a land "which I will show you" and is given a promise of blessing. He obeys and later arrives at Shechem at the oak of Moreh, where Yahweh appears again promising him that land.

There follows the "thrice-told tale" of patriarchal deception and the peril of the ancestress. The first appearance of this tale concerns a famine in Canaan and the journey of Abraham and Sarah to Egypt and the deception of the pharaoh by

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[1] The artificial Abram-Abraham and Sarai-Sarah distinctions of the final Priestly editors and revisers will be disregarded in this study.

Abraham concerning his relationship to Sarah. (This tale is told again in chapter 20, where the protagonist is Abimelech, king of Gerar, who also is deceived in the same way by Isaac in chapter 26.)[1] After the account of the journey to Egypt and the return of the rich Abraham to Canaan at the pharaoh's insistence Abraham and his kinsman Lot separate because of strife among their servants. In the account of the separation the generosity and magnanimity of Abraham are noted. The episodes in chapter 14 stand apart from the other Abrahamic traditions and will be discussed at greater length below. They concern Abraham the warrior, the wars of the five kings against the four, and the encounter between Abraham and Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem. To this is joined the episode relating Abraham's anxiety over lack of progeny and the prospect of his inheritance going to his slave, Eliezer. Yahweh's response is that his progeny will be innumerable. "And he believed (in) Yahweh and he counted to him (as) righteousness" (15:6). As an assurance to the questioning Abraham Yahweh entered into a covenant with him. The covenant ceremony is described as the cutting of animals in half and the passing of a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch between the parts of flesh. Yahweh tells Abraham of the "future" oppression of the people in Egypt, but gives him the covenantal promise of the possession of the land. Abraham's less-than-complete trust in Yahweh's promise is recounted in the episode of Sarah's gift and Abraham's acceptance of the Egyptian handmaid Hagar, of Sarah's later oppression of her, her flight during her pregnancy, and the divine assurance concerning her future and that of Ishmael.

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[1] Rudolf Kilian, Die Vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen ("Bonner Biblische Beiträge"; Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag GMBH, 1966), p. 213, suggests that Gen. 26 is the oldest variant of the "peril of the ancestress" motif. Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1948), pp. 60, 112, 123, points out that in the credo of Deut. 26:5-9 Jacob is the Erzvater. Jacob is middle Palestinian, while Abraham and Isaac are southern. According to Noth apparently the people of the God of Abraham at some point overtook the Isaac people and so completely ousted their traditions that they appear almost only as doublets when in reality they were primary.

The appearance of three visitors to Abraham at Mamre, his hospitality, the prediction of Sarah's bearing a son, and her disbelief follow. Yahweh muses whether to tell Abraham of his plan to destroy Sodom, but decides not to conceal it since "I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by *doing* righteousness and justice *so that* Yahweh may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."[1] (18:19, italics mine). Abraham's repeated intercession for Sodom has great power in persuading Yahweh, but ten righteous men are not found in the city to justify its deliverance. Accordingly Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, but Lot and his daughters survive. In the account of the "prophet" Abraham's deception of Abimelech, king of Gerar, in chapter 20 there is some attempt to rationalize this deception by having Sarah described as both wife and sister to Abraham (20:12). The birth of Isaac, the feast on the day of his weaning, the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael at Sarah's insistence (Abraham being reluctant until assured by Yahweh), and a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech follow in sequence in the narrative. Chapter 22 is the story of God's testing of Abraham in the binding of Isaac, the most profound Elohist contribution to the combined epic. Abraham's faith is demonstrated and the promise to him is repeated "because you have heeded my voice" (22:18). (This episode, which became increasingly significant in later re-interpretations, will be discussed at greater length below).

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[1] Kilian, *Die Vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen*, p. 106, argues that this verse, along with 26:5, must be a post-Yahwist and post-Elohist addition. He says that this statement much more recalls the prophetic or post-prophetic time. Such a position, however, ignores the prophetic nature of the Yahwist epic itself and subjectively imposes upon the Yahwist a rigidity of mind which is unwarranted.

The remaining Abrahamic references in Genesis are generally transitional or are references to earlier narratives. In the first part of chapter 25 (regarded as L by Eissfeldt and redactional by Pfeiffer) a genealogy of tribes through Abraham's third wife, Keturah, is given. The other references in the stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are self-identifications by Yahweh to these later patriarchs as the God of Abraham or the literary deposit of cultic formulas containing prayers or oaths. Special mention, however, should be made of the statement in 26:5, where Yahweh promises to Isaac that he will establish the promise which he swore to Abraham because he "obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my instructions." As von Rad points out, this is quite a new thought in the patriarchal stories. He notes that even in the Priestly document there is an absence of special interest in Abraham from the viewpoint of his exemplary obedience to all "commandments, ordinances, and instructions."[1] This statement, however, later becomes a prooftext of considerable significance for interpreters of Israel's traditions.

In the rest of the JE epic the concern with Abraham is simply connectional. In the Exodus narratives the mention of Abraham is always simply an identification of Yahweh with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or a reference to the promise to the patriarchs. The final reference (if Eissfeldt's categorization of this verse as Yahwist is correct) is Deuteronomy 34:4 where at the death of Moses the land into which the people are about to enter is identified as that of the patriarchal promise.

With this overview of the JE narrative of the Abraham tradition in mind there are three aspects of the epic tradition which merit more detailed attention. These aspects are: the nature of the promise and the covenant, the Abraham-Melchizedek encounter, and the story of the binding of Isaac.

The covenant and the promise form a continuing theme in the JE patriarchal narratives, but the precise nature of the relationship is stated in ways somewhat ambiguous when finally put together, thus leading to divergent exegesis in later tradition. At the beginning of the Abraham account Yahweh's command that he depart from Haran is accompanied by the promise that Yahweh will make Abraham a great nation and name so that he will be a blessing. He is promised that those who bless him will be blessed and those who curse him will be cursed and in him all the families of the earth will bless themselves (or be blessed). The verb form in this last phrase (12:3) is niph'al, as also in 18:18 and 28:14, but the hithpa'el is used in a similar statement in 22:18 and 26:4. Because of this, Muilenburg has suggested that it is wise to follow a "majority of scholars" and interpret the phrase reflexively.[1] This is consistent with the Gesenius discussion of the major uses of the derived conjugations of the Hebrew verb.[2] At the same time Skinner seems unnecessarily to constrict the meaning of the phrase to non-Hebrews' invoking blessings upon themselves with such phrases as "God make thee like Abraham."[3] The preposition ב can certainly carry here more of the meaning of "in" in the sense that the blessings which the nations bring upon themselves will result from their relationship to Abraham. It seems almost certain that this promise must have carried this kind of meaning for the universalistic prophetic interpreters of Israel's relationship to the nations, as well as for the court theologian of David's and Solomon's day who saw the empire as a fulfillment of "manifest destiny."

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[1] Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, tr. John H. Marks ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 266.

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[1] J. Muilenburg, "Abraham and the Nations: Blessing and World History," *Interpretation*, XIX (1965), 392. Edmond Jacob, "Abraham et sa significance pour la foi chrétienne," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, XLII (1962), 148-56, argues similarly. He notes that the passive is usually expressed by the participle or pu'al, citing Gen. 27:29, 33. Jacob suggests that the author here uses the ambiguous form of niph'al intentionally "to permit the extension of the blessing of Abraham to the nations not in a manner purely passive on their part." If Abraham is a blessing, in him resides a power in which the nations will benefit and not merely as inspired by his example. Particularly in relation to the primeval history it is clear that for J Abraham is an essential instrument for the salvation of the nations. Roland de Vaux, "Histoire d'Abraham," *Cahiers Sioniens*, V (1951), 5-16, also argues that the reflexive translation is grammatically more exact. For a defense of the passive interpretation see Josef Schreiner, "Segen für die Völker in der Verheissung an die Väter," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, n.F., VI (1962), 1-31. Clements, p. 59, points to the similarity of language between the promise to Abraham and Ps. 72:17, a royal psalm describing the Davidic king. (The hithpa'el is used in the psalm.)

[2] E. Kautzsch (ed.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, tr. A.E. Cowley (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), pp. 137-139, 149-151.

[3] John Skinner, *Genesis* (2nd ed.; "The International Critical Commentary"; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1930), p. 244.

At Moreh Yahweh appears again to Abraham saying, "To your seed I will give this land" (12:7).[1] Then again after the separation between Abraham and Lot Yahweh appears to Abraham with the promise of innumerable progeny and the land, commanding him to claim it by walking its length and breadth. The account of the establishment of the covenant in chapter 15 is directly related to Abraham's anxiety concerning the fulfillment of this promise. Yahweh appears to him and assures him of its fulfillment. Significantly, in the words of Yahweh, the notion of reward is introduced: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward (Hebrew=שכר, reward, wages, hire) is very great" (15:1).[2] Abraham's response and the results are set forth in a statement possessing much significance for later interpreters of tradition: "And he believed (Hebrew root=אמן) in Yahweh, and he counted

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[1] "Seed" always appears in the Genesis promises as a singular collective noun, זרע.

[2] von Rad, Genesis, p. 178, notes that the word sometimes refers to God's free gift in later literature (e.g., Isaiah 40:10; 62:11). It seems clear, however, that here the word should carry the primary root meaning, particularly since the association of the covenant with merit appears elsewhere in the epic.

(Hebrew root=חשב) to him (as) righteousness." (15:6). In a careful study of the use of the term, חשב, von Rad has shown that the term is usually cultic and refers to priestly judgment or declaration (e.g., Lev. 7:18; 17:4; Nu. 18:27). In this use in Genesis 15, however, the process is transferred from the cultic to a wholly personal relationship between Yahweh and Abraham. Yahweh discloses his plan for the future, Abraham fully accepts this, and this brings him into right relationship with Yahweh.[1] Elsewhere von Rad points to the idiomatic use of the term, "to have faith," which appears here, viz., its use with the preposition, ב. Thus to have faith means literally to make oneself secure in Yahweh.[2] In this telling of the covenant tradition Abraham appears as a passive listener and observer during the theophany, while a deep sleep engulfs him.

The covenant promise is repeated in chapter 22 at the binding of Isaac episode. The reference to the nations of the earth is prominent here also, as well as the element of patriarchal obedience. The promise will be fulfilled because Abraham heeded Yahweh's voice (22:19). To later patriarchs the promise is repeated in similar terms to those which we have described. We have already made mention of the statement in 26:3-5 where the promise to Abraham is repeated to Isaac and its fulfillment is said to be certain because of Abraham's obedience to Yahweh's charge, commandments, statutes, and instructions. Even in the latter chapters of Exodus (32:13; 33:1) remembrance is made of this promise in the crisis of the golden calf. The Torah in its closing verses (Deut. 34:4) also recalls the ancient patriarchal promise.

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[1] von Rad, "Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, tr. E. W. T. Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 128.

[2] von Rad, Old Testament Theology, I, 171. Cf. also von Rad, Genesis, p. 180.

Whatever the ultimate origin of the notion of the promise of the Fathers, it is clear that the epic writers, as they looked back through the Exodus-Sinai experience, not only sought to establish a continuity of events but also to root the present possession of the land and the flowering of national expansion and prosperity in the will of Yahweh and his ancient intention for his people. Walther Eichrodt has suggested that the manner of the description of the covenant relationship, both in the relating of Abraham to the nations and in the concern for obedience alongside unconditional trust, is intended to provide a counterpoise to narrow-minded particularism and also naturalistic distortions of the covenant relationship.[1] If this is the case, not only do the universalistic prophets rightly understand the epic, but also the presence of "pure grace" statements alongside "obedience, reward" statements is not accidental, but a reflection of the writer's theological perspective. Genesis 18:19, the musing of Yahweh before destroying Sodom, then is paradigmatic of a rather sophisticated covenant understanding: "No, for I have known him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice; so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him." The JE epic saw no dichotomy between grace and obedience.

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[1] Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. J. A. Baker (*"The Old Testament Library"*; *Philadelphia: The* Westminster Press, 1961), Vol. I, p. 50.

A second major area within the JE Abrahamic tradition which merits more detailed discussion is the encounter of Abraham and Melchizedek in chapter 14 belonging to a tradition which most commentators regard as belonging to none of the major strata of the Pentateuch.[1] This story fits rather awkwardly and strangely into this sequence of Abrahamic episodes and, from the perspective of Gunkel's criteria of investigation, shows every mark of its original independence from the mainstream of patriarchal tradition. It is thus especially important to examine it in terms of the most probable reasons for its inclusion within the epic and its theological meaning then as part of the completed narrative.

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[1] E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 105, designates it as source X. While Noth, p. 170, dismisses it as a late scholastic reconstruction, Speiser (p. 106) favors an early date for the narrative on the basis of internal and external evidence. Eissfeldt, pp. 211-212, regards the content as very old, but the insertion into the narrative as post-P. C. A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 590, regards it as late in a period after the cessation of any real sense of history. von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 170 regards it as redactional. Skinner, p. 256, sees it as having in itself evidence of high antiquity. Pfeiffer, pp. 160-161, 167, assigns the chapter to his S source which was inserted into the Pentateuch after P and more particularly regards 14:18-20 as a late midrash glorifying the Jerusalem priesthood. Significantly, however, he also dates Ps. 110 as Hasmonean. Ignatius Hunt, "Recent Melchizedek Study," *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought*, ed. John L. McKenzie (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), pp. 21-33, agrees that the material belongs to none of the standard Pentateuchal traditions, but also regards the material as quite ancient. Kilian, by omitting treatment of this chapter also obviously regards the chapter as post-P. While the uniqueness of this chapter is not to be gainsaid, this is not necessarily an indication that it was not a part of the epic tradition before the final Priestly edition of the Pentateuch. Given the acknowledgment of the antiquity of the material in its isolated form and the relationship between the Davidic and Abrahamic traditions, a date for the insertion of this material into the general tradition sometime during the monarchy has a greater probability than a post-exilic redaction. The treatment of this chapter within the framework of the epic tradition is, therefore, justified.

In the episode Abraham, upon his return from his defeat of a coalition of kings, is met by Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of ʾEl ʿElyon. Melchizedek brings bread and wine, blesses Abraham in the name of ʾEl ʿElyon, and Abraham gives him a tenth of everything. In its simplest form this story shows the ancestor of the race recognizing the superiority of the priest-king of Jerusalem at the point in the narrative where holy people and holy city are brought together for the first time.[1] Melchizedek is never mentioned again in Hebrew Scriptures except in the royal psalm, Psalm 110; and, as von Rad succinctly suggests, Abraham bows only to Melchizedek in this story so full of kings.[2] Skinner insists that Genesis 14 must be interpreted alongside Psalm 110 where the king of Israel (Davidic) is said to be of the Melchizedek order. He suggests that this psalm is hardly intelligible except on the supposition that Melchizedek was the ideal progenitor of the dynasty or hierarchy of Jerusalem.[3] The Jerusalem cult theology apparently assigned

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1. Skinner, p. 267. Hunt, p. 25, says that here Abraham is prescribed as acknowledging Melchizedek's god, sanctuary, and priesthood.

2. von Rad, Genesis, p. 176.

3. Skinner, p. 260.

cultic functions to the king (cf. David's wearing of the ephod and Solomon's officiating at the Temple dedication), although his actual functioning in a cultic role seems quite limited. (It is perhaps significant to notice that in the Former Prophets Saul is criticized for usurping priestly functions, whereas David and Solomon are not). It is suggested by von Rad that what we have in Genesis 14 is a very old court tradition which came over to David's court from pre-Israelite Jerusalem.[1] The story is then taken over by the Yahwist, writing in the glory of Solomon's reign, to show that Abraham had received the blessing of the precursor of David and his dynasty, and also that Abraham (as a model for his progeny) recognized his duty to the king of Jerusalem.[2]

It seems reasonable to assume that this story had been accepted in Jerusalem court circles before its incorporation into the epic. The conjecture receives some support from what is known of the royal theologians elsewhere, e.g., in the "covenant with David," and of David's own shrewdness in assuring his supremacy over ancient tribal loyalties. With the accession of Solomon the older amphictyonic priesthood was displaced by the Zadokite priesthood which had apparently existed alongside it (II Sam. 20:25) under David. It has been plausibly suggested that Zadok, whose origins are problematic, may have been a Jebusite priest of 'El ʿElyon at the time of David's capture of

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1. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, I, 42.

2. von Rad, Genesis, p. 176.

Jerusalem, and that he was "converted" and received into the royal service.[1] This story may have been Zadokite or at least Jebusite in origin and may have been incorporated into the Israelite tradition in a situation which worked to the advantage of both king and new priesthood. This combination of observations provides the most reasonable interpretation of the Melchizedek episode: the situation historically and politically at the time of the writing of the epic; the obvious sense of Psalm 110; the basic facts of the narrative in Genesis 14, and its peculiarity within the patriarchal narratives as a whole.[2]

A third major part of the JE Abrahamic epic which requires more detailed consideration, particularly in view of its importance in later tradition, is the episode of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. The familiar features of the story dramatically present the faith of Abraham and his utter obedience to the demands of Yahweh.[3] John McKenzie has noted that it is evident that the compilers of our present Pentateuch intended the story to appear where it does as the climax of the spiritual adventure of Abraham.[1]

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[1] Hans W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, tr. J. W. Bowden ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 294.

[2] See Clements, passim.

[3] Most critics regard this as Elohist, although Speiser, p. 166, says that on internal evidence the personality behind the story should be J. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p. 126, argues that the presence of the tradition only in E indicates that it did not belong to the old Abraham component, and that it is impossible to tell when Abraham was made the mid-point of the story.

There is a textual problem in this episode at the very outset. The Masoretic Text locates the near-sacrifice of Isaac in the land of Moriah, upon one of the mountains there (22:2). This name, Moriah, is attested elsewhere in the Old Testament only in the late, post-exilic passage in II Chronicles 3:1, where it is identified with the location of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Septuagint has ὑψηλήν (which it also has for Moreh in 12:6). The Syriac version has Amorites, and the Samaritan version has המוראה, obviously identifying Moreh (written plene here) with Shechem (cf. 12:6). Both the Samaritan Targum's חזיתה and Symmachus' τῆς ὀπτασίας, as well as the Vulgate reading, obviously take the term to be related to the verb, ראה (cf. 22:14). Skinner has suggested that the tradition in Chronicles is so late and unreliable that it is a question of whether the Chronicler's use of it rests upon a traditional interpretation of the Genesis passage or whether it is introduced here in Genesis (at a late date) on the strength of the Chronicler's notice. He notes the unlikelihood that the whole land around the Temple site was called מריה, even if the hill itself was possibly so designated.[2] Skinner's suggestion (supported also by von Rad) is that the text of Genesis has been altered either in accordance with the fanciful etymology of 22:14 (reflected in Symmachus, Samaritan Targum, and Vulgate) or on the authority of the passages in II Chronicles. The reason was that the chief sanctuary of Davidic and later times might be connected with the patriarchal history and thus given the authority of antiquity.[1] In view of the extreme tensions between Samaritans and Jews in post-exilic times, the obvious fact that many of the most important sites in the patriarchal tradition were in the post-exilic period in Samaritan territory, and given the very close similarity of Moreh and Moriah in the consonantal text, Jewish post-exilic tampering with the text appears most likely. From these considerations we may conclude that Genesis 22 was made to agree with II Chronicles 3:1 and not vice versa. It is possible that the Syriac may represent a tradition finally the most authentic, but if so, this tradition was rejected in the polemical theology of the post-exilic period. Once this identification between the site of the Jerusalem Temple and the place of Isaac's near-sacrifice was made, later interpreters of Jewish tradition accepted it and the Genesis story was interpreted in light of the cultic theology of the Jerusalem priesthood. This slight modification in the tradition has an importance in later Jewish thinking not to be underestimated.

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[1] John L. McKenzie, "The Sacrifice of Isaac," Scripture, IX (1957), 80. McKenzie points out, however, that this does not imply that the story had this significance in its original form.

[2] Skinner, p. 328.

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[1] Skinner, p. 329. Cf. von Rad, Genesis, p. 235. Kilian, p. 277, suggests that the redactor who identified the holy place of Gen. 22 with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem probably had not only a simple hagiograph, but a tradition behind it.

The Deuteronomic Abrahamic Tradition

During the apostasy of Manasseh and Amon in Judah the ancient Mosaic covenant tradition did not completely disappear, but was preserved to make its appearance in the reign of Josiah. The circles which preserved the Mosaic covenant concept during this time have been identified by von Rad as the Levitical priests, and this tradition itself has been identified essentially as the amphictyonic traditions associated earlier with the Shechem sanctuary.[1] It is usually recognized that the reformation associated with the finding of the Book of the Law was a "rediscovery of Moses," which was in itself a part of a general return to past traditions throughout the nations of the Near East at that time.[2] It is important then to see how the patriarchal traditions fit into this re-telling of ancient tradition, both in Deuteronomy and in the Deuteronomic Former Prophets.

The Deuteronomists focus almost exclusively upon the patriarchs as recipients of Yahweh's free grace. Abraham as an individual or as an example of faith receives no real emphasis in the Deuteronomic material. Indeed in the entire corpus of Deuteronomic materials he is mentioned apart from Isaac and Jacob only once (Jos. 24:3). The three patriarchs together represent to the Deuteronomists a single theological entity--the fathers, the recipients of grace. Every passage in the "Mosaic" sermons which mentions Abraham-Isaac-Jacob refers to the oath sworn to the fathers. Deuteronomy 9:5 is typical of this theological perspective on the patriarchs. Here it is stated that Israel's relationship to Yahweh rests upon grace and that their "future" possession of the land will not be due to their righteousness, but because of God's own desire to fulfill his promise to the fathers. Even in the face of "future" sin, the Deuteronomists appeal to the grace of the patriarchal covenant. Clements has noted that the Deuteronomists' focus on the possession of the land is really a reaffirmation of the original character of the patriarchal covenant. Also in consistency with the Deuteronomic attitude toward kingship, the fulfillment of the promise to the fathers is at Horeb and not in the Davidic empire or dynasty.[1]

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[1] von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, tr. David Stalker ("Studies in Biblical Theology," No. 9; London: SCM Press,Ltd., 1953), pp. 66, 68.

[2] Anderson, p. 313. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 298.

This use of the patriarchal tradition, which is interpreted in terms of "pure grace" is primarily for the purpose of appealing to the conscience of the hearers to obey the concrete demands of the Mosaic covenant. As von Rad writes:

> This trend toward exhortation is the real characteristic of the Deuteronomistic presentation of the law. Undoubtedly these sermons include factual explanation and direction for concrete action as well, but they are above all concerned with man's basic attitude towards the will of God. They are concerned to stir up the right spirit. They

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[1] Clements, pp. 65-66. The phrase "the land which he swore to your fathers" occurs with almost monotonous frequency in the book.

> appeal to the intention and lay the problem of obedience quite directly on the conscience of each individual.[1]
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> . . . .
>
> This is the explanation of the pressing, sometimes even imploring, way of speaking, and the endeavor to grip the hearers personally in order to bind the divine commands on their conscience.[2]

Whereas in the JE account of the patriarchs grace and obedience as reasons for the covenant relationship were held together paradoxically, Deuteronomy can, with the literary form of Mosaic sermons, treat the entire patriarchal tradition under the category of pure grace. On the basis of this prior grace the Deuteronomists can then seek to elicit the proper response to grace, which is obedience to the commandments which "Moses" now gives. A recounting of God's mercies to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should bring forth moral obedience to grace (cf. 30:19-20). At the same time, while proclaiming a covenant of grace (which God will not forget, 4:31; will keep, 7:12; will confirm, 8:18, 9:5), the Deuteronomists believe that it is still possible that a generation shall be punished for disobedience and become subservient to foreign powers. These disasters, however, do not ultimately negate the promise sworn to the fathers. The only other aspect of the patriarchal tradition which is mentioned at all in Deuteronomy, in a plea against idolatry, is the notice in 13:6 that this sin was unknown to "your fathers."

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[1] von Rad, Deuteronomy, tr. Dorothea Barton ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 23.

Within the Deuteronomic History the interest in Abraham and the other patriarchs is minor indeed. The most significant reference is found in Jos. 24:2-3, reporting the Shechem ceremony of covenant renewal. While the question of the background of this particular chapter is complex, its extant form is a Deuteronomic edition and represents the Deuteronomic point of view.[1] In the Shechem ceremony, Abraham stands at the beginning of the recital of Heilsgeschichte. In this recital of history the idolatry of Terah and God's bringing of Abraham from beyond the River are told. The leading of the patriarch Abraham is the first of many acts and gifts of God to which the people, now in possession of the land, are called to respond in covenant renewal.

The only other references to Abraham in the Deuteronomic History occur in the books of Kings. In Elijah's prayer to Yahweh on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:36-37) he calls upon "Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," using a formula frequently employed in later Jewish texts.[2] Perhaps more important is the editorial note (post-Deuteronomic?) in II Kings 13:22-23. We read that, after the time of Elisha, "Hazael, king of Syria, oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz . . . but Yahweh was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them; nor has he cast them from his presence until now." This editorial comment is often assigned to a date later than either of the two Deuteronomic editors of the books of Kings.[1] In theological point of view it does stand close to the assurances of exilic and post-exilic prophecy, though this kind of argument on viewpoint cannot be made absolute. Certainly neither of these references in Kings plays any important role in the books as a whole.

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[1] Bright, "The Book of Joshua: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), II, 542, 545. Hertzberg, Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953), p. 132.

[2] Cf. Martin Rist, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: A Liturgical and Magical Formula," Journal of Biblical Literature, LVII (1938), 290.

Thus in the Deuteronomic tradition there is no real concern which may be termed "historical" for the events of the patriarchs' lives. Abraham is present, in company with Isaac and Jacob, as the beginning of Israel's experience with Yahweh, as paradigmatic recipients of his grace. The constant reminders of the fathers in the sermons in Deuteronomy are proof-phrases for a theology of grace, a grace which was given in election before the concretizing of Yahweh's demands at Sinai. Grace is presented in this manner with the hope of eliciting the proper response of love and obedience in the Josianic days and thereafter.

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[1] Norman Snaith, "The I and II Books of Kings: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), III, 259. John Gray, *I & II Kings* ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 544. Gray admits the possibility of an earlier date, but takes "until now" (missing in the Septuagint) as a gloss.

It may be said that Deuteronomy oversimplifies or even distorts the patriarchal tradition, at least as it existed in the epics. Nevertheless his arranging of grace and law in sequential order was at the same time a notable refraction, completely in harmony with the Exodus tradition and further has the intense emotional appeal which is lacking in JE, with its ostensibly paradoxical statements of the conditions of the patriarchal covenant. The Deuteronomic point of view toward the patriarchal traditions certainly seems to have been taken seriously by the Priestly writers in their final redaction of the Pentateuch, although, as we shall see, these Priestly writers contributed their own further insights.

Abraham in the Pre-exilic Prophetic Tradition

In the authentic writings from the teaching of the pre-exilic prophets there is an almost complete absence of references to the patriarchal covenantal motifs or to other patriarchal traditions.[1] Unlike the Deuteronomists, these prophets do not appeal paraenetically to the covenant promises in hope of eliciting a response of obedience. Rather they thunder denunciations against a people who have broken the clearly revealed instructions of Yahweh. They opposed a perversion of the understanding of the relationship of Yahweh and Israel which expressed itself in an externalism of form devoid of genuine moral obedience and a self-confidence complacent in its election. Any appeal, therefore, to the patriarchal tradition might easily have been twisted to support the popular perversion of the understanding of election.[1] Actually Deuteronomy and the pre-exilic prophets attack the problem of Israel's disobedience to Yahweh's demands with a similar concern, but the Deuteronomic approach is largely pastoral and hortatory while the prophetic approach is more directly denunciatory. Most of the references to Abraham in the "edited" scrolls of the pre-exilic prophets are dated by reliable scholars as post-exilic contributions and will be discussed in a later section of this study.

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[1] Hosea's use is the most extensive and is hardly complimentary. See, e. g. the description of Jacob in Hosea 12.

There are, however, two passages in pre-exilic prophecy which are possibly allusions to the Abrahamic tradition. In Jeremiah 4:1-2, an oracle dated early in the prophet's career (prior to 622 by John Bright),[2] there is the statement that if the people of Judah will repent, then the nations will bless themselves (התברכו) in Yahweh. This seems to be an allusion to the earlier forms of the promise to Abraham, though Jeremiah says that the nations will bless themselves in Yahweh (rather than Abraham), perhaps purposefully modifying the wording of the promise. He makes the blessings upon the nations conditional upon Israel's obedience, thus absorbing the patriarchal covenant into the clear moral demands of the Mosaic tradition.[1]

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[1] See the analysis of J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 331.

[2] Bright, Jeremiah ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 29.

A second possible allusion to the Abrahamic tradition is Isaiah 2:1-4 (found also in Micah 4:1-4), an oracle concerning the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. Many scholars regard this as an anonymous oracle.[2] Some admit, however, that if it is a genuine pre-exilic oracle it more probably belongs to Isaiah than to Micah, and would be dated in his later career.[3] This oracle of pilgrimage, with its clear reference to the God of Jacob, is not far removed in content from the oracle in chapter 11. Indeed it may well be that Isaiah found this universalistic aspect of the promise to Abraham completely compatible with his Zion-centered theology. Whatever the origin of this oracle, it must not be rejected *a priori*, as non-Isaianic, especially in the light of the suggestion, made earlier, that the patriarchal and royal theology traditions were brought together during the genesis of the Davidic dynasty. This oracle pictures the international pilgrimage to Zion, from whence flows the instruction of Yahweh "in the latter days," and if Isaianic, certainly was thought to occur after the employment of the rod of Yahweh's anger against his rebellious people.

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[1] Muilenburg, "Abraham and the Nations," 396.

[2] R. B.Y. Scott, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39: Introduction and Exegesis": *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 181. Cf. Anderson, p. 267, note 10.

[3] Scott, V, 180. Anderson, p. 267, note 10, and p. 278, note 20. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, (2 vols., New York: Harper and Row, 1965), II, 295, regards it as the oldest version of the pilgrimage to Zion and discusses it before II Isaiah.

If these two passages are genuine allusions to the promise to Abraham preserved in the older traditions, they not only show the prophetic awareness of this tradition, but give another example of the varying existential refraction of ancient tradition. The prophets' primary emphasis on obedience to the clearly-known will of Yahweh could be related in their thought to a universalistic dimension of promise, either as hope in the present or as fulfillment in the latter days of perfect obedience and bliss.

The Priestly Abrahamic Tradition

The destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon brought increased emphasis on the patriarchal traditions. The Priestly theologians sought to re-interpret the ancient traditions in the time of the nation's tragedy and consciousness of guilt. The faith of the Priestly theologians of the exile can be seen partially by analyzing their redaction of the earlier epic tradition, into which they inserted Deuteronomy as well as a considerable amount of their own particular Priestly tradition. Some of the Priestly additions to the older epic material merely reflect stylistic concerns, such as the regular placing of genealogies, or the statement of the age of a person at the time of significant events. Other additions hold more theological import. The major Priestly additions will be summarized below, and then the theological point of view of the Priestly writers examined closely.

After a beginning genealogy, the Priestly patriarchal material departs from the JE tradition by relating a two-stage exodus from Ur, with Terah going as far as Haran (perhaps indicating an attempt to combine two traditions).[1] The next additions are explanatory. In 13:6 the separation of Lot and Abraham is made inevitable because of their great wealth, and 13:11-12 offers a smooth explanation for Lot's later appearance in Sodom, which had not been accounted for in JE. The Sarah-Hagar episode also has certain modifications indicating Sarah's barrenness, the date of the gift of Hagar, the naming of Ishmael, and Abraham's age at that time.

Chapter 17 is the major contribution of the Priestly writers to the Abraham tradition. This is the account of the institution of the patriarchal covenant and the cultic rite of circumcision. Yahweh appears to Abraham (as 'El Shaddai), commands him to walk before him and be whole, and establishes the covenant between them with the promise of exceeding fruitfulness, and of many nations and kings for progeny. The covenant is described (17:7) as an everlasting covenant and includes the gift of the land of Canaan and the significant explicit statement concerning Abraham's seed that "I will be their God" (17:8). This establishment of the personal relationship between Israel and Yahweh seems to be primary in the Priestly emphasis. The Priestly writers also use the artificial device of the change of name from Abram to Abraham (and later from Sarai to Sarah) to demonstrate this new situation occasioned by the establishment of the covenant. The sign of the covenant which must be kept, according to the Priestly writers, is circumcision, and failure to do so results in exclusion from the covenant community. Abraham is assured that the promise to him will be fulfilled through a son born to him and Sarah despite their old age (and not through Ishmael, of whom Abraham speaks [17:18] in disbelief). Abraham complies with the demand of circumcision--thus accepting this covenant relationship. While it is assumed throughout the Old Testament that the people of Israel always practiced the rite of circumcision, there is nevertheless more than one tradition reflecting this origin among them (cf. Exodus 4:24ff. and Joshua 5:2ff., especially in the Septuagint).[1] While circumcision was a usual practice among Israelites, the significance and importance given to it here is clearly an exilic and post-exilic emphasis.[2] It should also be pointed out here that for the Priestly writers the covenant with Abraham had dimensions extending beyond Israel. Abraham would become the father of many nations and kings; and therefore Ishmael, who is not the child of the promise, receives the mark of circumcision.[1] This is consistent with the theology of the Priestly writers who alone among the interpreters of Israel's traditions up to this point in her history includes a covenant between Israel's God and all mankind (in the Noah story).

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[1] Cuthbert A. Simpson, I, 570.

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[1] Skinner, p. 296. Speiser, pp. 123, 128, curiously translates Abraham's response to the birth announcement as "smiled" in 17:17 and Sarah's response as "laughed" in 18:12, although both are forms of the same verb, צחק, usually translated "laugh." Although Speiser suggests (p. 125) that the verb has a wider range of meaning, in context it can hardly mean anything other than "laughed."

[2] von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 196. See also Speiser, p. 127; Clements, pp. 73-74.

The other Priestly additions to the Abraham narrative are largely concerned with the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. In 19:29 Lot is saved because God remembered Abraham, the power of whose intercession had been portrayed so dramatically in the JE epic. In 21:2b P notes the birth of Isaac "in the time spoken by God" and indicates the circumcision of Isaac (not explicitly mentioned by JE). But one finds in chapter 23 the second major insertion of Priestly material into the Abraham stories. The death of Sarah and the purchase of a burial place from the Hittites by Abraham, are significant for P, for these happenings provide a kind of preliminary fulfillment of the promise of the land of Canaan. Finally P makes a few other additions (25:7-10) recording Abraham's death and burial (by Isaac and Ishmael).

In the stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph the Priestly writers seek to link these successive narratives to the primary Abraham tradition, and especially to bring Isaac and Jacob to the Abrahamic burial place. This linking of the promise to each generation of patriarchs is seen in the account of Jacob's departure from Paddan-aram(28:1-9), 'El Shaddai's appearance at Bethel upon Jacob's return from Laban (35:9-13), and the presentation of Ephraim and Manasseh to Jacob by Joseph (48:3-7). The remaining P Abrahamic references in Pentateuchal material are, without exception, references to God's promise to the patriarchs and his remembrance of his oath to them. In Exodus 2:24 the remembrance of the patriarchal covenant by God is the motive for the Exodus deliverance. This is true also of Exodus 6:8 where Yahweh, who in 6:3 has been identified with the God of the Fathers, promises to bring Moses to the land sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the Holiness Code in Leviticus, in the description of punishments for disobedience, it is said (Lev. 26:42) that if the people (in the future) who have been deported for iniquity (an obvious contemporary reference) confess their iniquity and make amends, "then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land." In this general statement of belief in restoration after exile the covenant has not been annihilated, but a future remains because of God's steadfastness.[1] Finally in Numbers 32:11, in the allotment of the land in Transjordan, God says that those who came out of Egypt, but proved unfaithful, would not inherit the land sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This latter statement is very close to the Deuteronomic perspective that the covenant relationship remains even though a generation may be severely punished for disobedience. The promise still stands for future generations.

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[1] Clements, p. 72, points to this as an expression of the Priestly writers' concern to root the whole of Israel's life, including its monarchy, in the promises made to Abraham. The JE account of the covenant promise makes no specific mention of kings.

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[1] Martin Noth, Leviticus, tr. J. E. Anderson ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 200-201.

It thus becomes clear that the Priestly interest in Abraham focuses on the patriarchal covenant. The major additions to older narratives are concerned with the giving and fulfillment of this covenant. The Priestly covenant theology has been carefully studied by Walther Zimmerli in an essay, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund," in which he insists that for P there are only two covenants: with mankind (Noah) and with Israel (Abraham).[1] Zimmerli notes that the covenant category is basic to P (cf. his use of it in the Noah and Abraham stories) and that he is obviously aware of the tradition of a covenant-happening at Sinai.[2] He suggests that P does not think of Sinai as in any sense a new or different covenant from the patriarchal covenant, but in fact redesigns the material in the Sinai narrative in such a way that his own sacramental interests replace the original emphasis on covenant obligation.[3] He notes that J had already placed the fathers and Moses alongside each other in the relationship of promise-fulfillment, but that P binds them even more tightly together.[4] The Mosaic revelation is simply the fulfi~~l~~lment of the patriarchal covenant and significantly is climaxed by the bestowal of the priestly cult, the divinely appointed means for living in relationship with God.

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[1] Walther Zimmerli, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund," *Gottes Offenbarung; Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament*", (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), p. 205. Cf. Skinner, p. 297. Zimmerli particularly takes issue with Wellhausen's theory of four covenants and says that he is recovering a point of view presented by Stade in 1905.

[2] Zimmerli, pp. 208-210.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

This point of view, presented in Zimmerli's essay, of a covenant relationship given as an act of free grace and sustained through the ordained cult, is supported when an analysis is made of P's covenant language. P prefers to use the verbs קום and נתן, vis-à-vis J's use of כרת and D's שׁמר. Also for P the covenant is a berith 'olam, not dependent upon man's behavior in the final analysis, but maintained for all times by virtue of Yahweh's eternal steadfastness.[1] Notice should also be given to the phrase "covenant of salt" within the Priestly materials to describe the cult itself (Nu. 18:19; cf. "salt of the covenant" in Lev. 2:13), the means and expression of fellowship between man and God.[2] In Numbers 25:13, P also speaks of a covenant of a perpetual priesthood with Phineas because of his zeal during the apostasy in Moab. In exilic and post-exilic times both Aaronic priests and the Levites were concerned to establish their prerogatives upon divine decrees. Within the overall perspective of P these last usages described are primarily means of grace in the maintaining of Yahweh's covenant with Israel.[1]

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[1] Eichrodt, Vol. I, pp. 56-57. This term, ברית עלם, is found also with frequency in the exilic prophets. Cf. the phrase also in the Davidic covenant in II Samuel 7. Clements, p. 71.

[2] Noth, Leviticus, p. 29. The Chronicler also uses the phrase to describe the eternality of the Davidic dynasty in II Chronicles 13:5.

The exile made painfully clear that Yahweh himself had brought judgment upon disobedience. This had been at the center of pre-exilic prophetic proclamation. The exile, however, brought a profound examination of the ultimate foundation and hope of Israel. This involved turning to a covenant preceding the Sinai-event, *viz.*, the covenant with the fathers, the covenant of pure, unmerited grace, given long before the concrete demands of God's will had been declared by Moses.[2] It also meant focusing, not primarily on commandments given at Sinai, but rather upon the gift of the cult, in all of its detailed means for maintaining the covenant community in proper relationship with God, including dealing with the sins of the community which are inevitable and must be cultically covered. Thus Zimmerli suggests that precisely in the handling of their material the Priestly writers become a witness to faith in grace. In this perspective all of the covenantal experiences of Israel are subordinated to the pure grace of the Abrahamic covenant upon which election ultimately rests.[3]

If these Priestly writers with their theological anchor in God's unmerited grace and steadfast purpose are in any way representative of a new theological emphasis associated with the crisis of exile, it can be reasonably expected that interest in Abraham and expressions of Abrahamic covenantal theology will appear in at least some of the exilic and post-exilic prophets, as well as in other writings of that time.

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[1] John Marsh, "The Book of Numbers: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), II, 264, argues that in Nu. 25:13 berith should simply be translated as "promise." This, however, ignores the obvious technical meaning of the term.

[2] Zimmerli, p. 215. Cf. Eichrodt, Vol. I, p. 51.

[3] Zimmerli, p. 216. See also Clements, pp. 76-78.

Abraham in Exilic and Post-exilic Prophecy

Perhaps the earliest exilic prophetic statement which is concerned with Abraham comes from the teaching of Ezekiel in 33:23-29.[1] This oracle is significant in showing the kind of misunderstanding which the earlier Deuteronomic statements easily elicited as well as the kind of misunderstanding to which later prophetic statements were subject. Ezekiel addresses the inhabitants of the waste places of Jerusalem after its fall who assume that they will inherit the land left desolate, citing the example of Abraham who, though only one, got possession of the land. Ezekiel refutes their claim, answering in the stern spirit of pre-exilic prophecy and pointing to their wickedness. He says that they will not possess the land, but will die by sword, beast, and pestilence.[2]

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[1] Herbert G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), VI, 244, regards this section as editorial, but this skepticism is unwarranted.

[2] Eichrodt, Der Prophet Hesekiel, Kapitel 19-48 ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 320-321.

For Deutero-Isaiah the Abraham tradition is important as an assurance of grace to weary exiles. In two specific places he points to Abraham as an anchor for belief in the steadfastness of God's purposes of gracious election. In 41:8 Israel is identified as the servant of Yahweh, and the phrases in parallelism are "Jacob, whom I have chosen," and "the offspring of Abraham, my beloved (אהבי)." The point of the entire poem is made explicit in the succeeding lines (41:9), "I have chosen you and not cast you off." Thus assurance of God's good intention always for his people is founded in the reference to the very beginning of Israel--Abraham's election.[1] Again in 51:1-2 the winsome voice of Deutero-Isaiah invokes the Genesis Abraham tradition as the prophet calls upon the exiles to "look to the rock from whence you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were digged. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many." The appeal is to history as the motive for faith: as in the past God's promises will issue in transformation. John L. McKenzie points out that much of the Abraham saga in Genesis is concerned with the difficulties of believing in the promise of numerous offspring when the wife was infertile. Thus both names are significant here.[2] Deutero-Isaiah proclaims that

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[1] J. Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 455.

[2] John L. McKenzie, Second Isaiah, ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1968), p. 125.

Yahweh was a God of grace from the very beginning of the peoples' existence and so he still remains.

Eichrodt summarizes this use of the patriarchal tradition by Deutero-Isaiah with the statement that it is through recollection of the ever-constant nature of the divine activity that faith is kindled.[1] Because of Deutero-Isaiah's obvious concern with the patriarchal tradition, the probability that the Abrahamic covenant contributed to his portrait of the Servant of Yahweh needs to be given due weight, particularly with respect to its universalistic features, such as "a covenant to the people"(42:6; 49;8) and "light to the Gentiles" (42:6; 49:6). Indeed, the Abraham tradition fits well and supports the monotheistic "gospel" of this prophet and should not be excluded from consideration as a source of his thought.

The other Abrahamic references or allusions in post-exilic prophecy are all anonymous, but generally are similar in their theological significance to the Abraham tradition in the thought of Deutero-Isaiah. Perhaps one of the earliest of these anonymous prophecies has been inserted into the text of Micah.[2] In the section beginning with 7:8 there is the recognition of the justice of God's judgment upon the people (7:9), but beyond judgment there is to be a restoration. The foundation for this belief that God will pardon iniquity for the remnant of his inheritance and cast their sins into the depths of the sea, is the oath to the fathers. Their "corporate personality" in the latter days will be the recipient of "faithfulness to Jacob and chesed to Abraham" (7:20). The ancient promise remains because of the very nature of God.[1]

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[1] Eichrodt, Theology, Vol. I, p. 61.

[2] Rolland E. Wolfe, "The Book of Micah: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 945.

In the scroll of Jeremiah there is a reference to the Abrahamic tradition in a section, 33:14-26, which is missing from the Septuagint. It is generally agreed that this section, with its strong emphasis on Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood, must come from a post-exilic period when there was need to encourage the people in these beliefs.[2] The concern with the continuity of Levitical priests certainly is far nearer the mood of the Chronicler than of the historical Jeremiah. In this anonymous post-exilic prophecy, against the voices of those who charge that God has rejected his people, it is asserted (33:25-26) that his promises are as sure as day and night.

> Thus says Yahweh: "If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will reject the descendents of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his descendents to rule over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy upon them."

Here it should be noted that the patriarchal and Davidic traditions are held together in much the same way as in the JE

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1. Artur Weiser, Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten, I ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Reprecht, 1949), p. 261.

2. J. Philip Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 1052.

epic. But here also the primacy of grace and compassion, as typical of P and Deutero-Isaiah, is fundamental.[1]

Among the anonymous prophecies in the Isaiah scroll (apart from what is generally regarded as the work of Deutero-Isaiah) there are several brief allusions and references to the Abraham tradition. In Isaiah 29:22, which is generally recognized as a late addition is an oracle of restoration from Yahweh, "who redeemed (פדה) Abraham."[2] This slight allusion is very much in the spirit of Deutero-Isaiah with whom the past redeeming action of Yahweh is the assurance of his present power and willingness to restore his people. A poignant prayer from a period certainly later than Deutero-Isaiah comes in chapter 63. Here Trito-Isaiah calls upon Yahweh, "our Father, our Redeemer from of old" (63:16). He cries that Abraham and Israel are dead and have no real present relationship with the people. In the disillusioned time of the return, when God seemed far away and the rich promises of an earlier generation had failed to materialize, this prophet literally begs Yahweh to do something in their desperate situation. He too speaks out of a theology of grace, knowing that ultimately this is all that can save--if only Yahweh will break his silence.

There are other oracles in this Isaianic anthology which may be allusions to the ancient patriarchal promise. Alongside some oracles in which Gentiles are subjugated to Israel, there are others of a more universalistic outlook. Among these are 19:23-25, particularly with the language of verse 24 that "in that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth." Muilenburg sees this as a quite conscious statement of hope of fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.[1] Its date seems quite late, with a possible allusion in 19:18 to the Onias temple at Heliopolis.[2] Among the other universalistic oracles possibly related to the ancient Abrahamic promise are 56:1-8, where foreigners as proselytes present sacrifices in the house of Yahweh which will be called "a house of prayer for all peoples" (56:7); and finally the remarkable and unparalleled statement in 66:18-24 that in the gathering of all nations and tongues some Gentiles will even become priests and Levites.[3]

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[1] Weiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia, Kapitel 1-25, 13* ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1952), p. 316.

[2] Scott, V, 327.

Thus in exilic and post-exilic prophecy, as with the Priestly writers of the exile, the Abraham tradition is quite important theologically. It means for them an assurance of grace, and for some of them it is support for a universalistic outlook which relates all men to the blessings of the God of

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[1] Muilenburg, "Abraham and the Nations," 396.

[2] Scott, V, 281-282.

[3] Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," V, 772. This seems the most probable interpretation in context and in relationship to 56:6-7. McKenzie, Second Isaiah, p. 209, says "Here in a clumsily written prose gloss is one of the most spacious views of religion found in the entire Old Testament."

Israel.[1] These prophets are aware of the consequences of disobedience, but look back beyond the Sinai tradition with its blessings and curses to the patriarchal tradition and the free election of Israel by Yahweh and his steadfastness to his ancient purpose. For them Israel's existence depends ultimately upon divine grace and not upon the vicissitudes of human response. For them, as for P, the relationship between Yahweh and Israel is a certain, everlasting covenant.

The Chronicler's Abrahamic Tradition

The work of the Chronicler comes from a time of concern for authentic Judaism, particularly a continuity with the people of God before the exile.[2] The writing of the Chronicler must also be seen historically in the context of extreme tensions existing between Jew and Samaritan in this period. He is certainly aware of the collections of tradition written down before his time, and from them he draws lessons from the past for his own time, refracting the ancient traditions according to the felt needs of his hour. He has with some justification been described as a midrashist, in the best etymological sense of that term.[1]

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[1] Zech. 8:13 should be especially noted: "And as you have been a by-word of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing." This hope is stated again in language very close to that of the Abrahamic promise.

[2] Jacob M. Myers, I Chronicles ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. lxiv.

There are three kinds of Abrahamic references in the Chronicler's work. The first consists simply of the genealogical references in I Chronicles 1 in a lineage which goes back to Adam, but then narrows down to the sons of Abraham. The second type of reference is the quotation of Psalm 105, a psalm which follows Heilsgeschichte from the promise of the land to its fulfillment, which occurs in I Chronicles 16. Here God is described as one who remembers the patriarchal covenant, with specific reference to the land. The entire quotation in I Chronicles 16 is composite and includes portions of Psalm 96 and 106.[2] (Psalm 105 will be discussed in a later section of this chapter).

The third kind of Abrahamic reference in the work of the Chronicler is by far that of greatest significance. It is here that we encounter quite explicitly the Chronicler's own theological views. Von Rad has argued cogently that the Chronicler's own priestly lineage is essentially that of the Deuteronomical-Levitical tradition.[3] This accords well with the

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[1] Myers, I Chronicles, p. xviii.

[2] Myers, p. 121, regards the combining of the psalms as the work of the Chronicler. W. A. L. Elmslie, "The I and II Books of Chronicles: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (12 vols., New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), III, 401-402, regards it as a later insertion. With the Chronicler's use of a variety of earlier materials, there is no reason to deny his combining of these psalm portions himself.

[3] von Rad, "The Levitical Sermon in I and II Chronicles," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, p. 268.

Chronicler's great concern with the role of the Levites and with the sermonizing of the books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. Indeed von Rad suggests that what we have in the speeches in the Chronicler's work is a distinct form-category, the Levitical sermon.[1] He points out well that these sermons call into question the general view that the post-exilic period was one of narrow legalism. He suggests that rather these sermons embrace pivotal concepts of Israel's faith in her greatest days.[2] Otto Plöger has sharpened this kind of observation by pointing to the Chronicler's preference for the "prayer" form in sermonizing. He suggests that the references in these prayers must be seen in the context of contemporary events and that they express what the Chronicler begs for realization.[3] It seems that this methodology of the composed speech was taken over partly from the Deuteronomic tradition in which the Chronicler stood, but that he gave to this methodology his own emphases.[4]

The first of these Chronicler's compositions which utilize the Abraham tradition is David's "farewell prayer" just

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1. von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, p. 277.

2. Ibid., p. 280.

3. Otto Plöger, "Reden und Gebete im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtswerk," Festschrift für Gunther Dehn, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1957), pp. 46-47.

4. Myers, II Chronicles ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 177. This tradition of speech composition should certainly be given due weight in considering the speeches in Acts and the Johannine discourses.

before his death in I Chr. 29:10ff. "David" uses the liturgical address, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." He recognizes life as a sojourning, as was the experience of the fathers. The focus of the prayer, however, is on "David's" delight in the bringing of offerings to the Jerusalem shrine. This serves the Chronicler's purpose of reminding the people to continue their obligation to Temple and cult.[1] The prayer is essentially for God "to keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of they people," (I Chr. 29:18).

In II Chr. 20:5ff. the writer draws attention to Jehoshaphat's piety and its rewards (perhaps utilizing an historical kernel).[2] This reforming king prays to God, "God of our Fathers," when a number of small nations assemble to do battle with Judah. He refers to God's power and might and his driving out of the original inhabitants of Canaan to give land to the descendents of Abraham, "your beloved," (cf. Deutero-Isaiah) forever. In virtue of that ancient and sure patriarchal promise he prays that God will not permit these nations to dispossess Judah. He concludes (II Chr. 20:12) with the statement: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." This sermonic prayer surely reflects the anxiety of the small postexilic Jewish community in the face of opposition and hostility of the surrounding peoples. Significantly once again the theological reality in which the Chronicler places the ultimate destiny of the people and his own trust is the patriarchal promise which has the clear dimension of "forever."

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[1] Kurt Galling, Die Bücher der Chronik, Esra, Nehemia ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1954), p. 77.

[2] Myers, II Chronicles, p. 114.

Again in II Chr. 30:1ff., in the account of Hezekiah's great Passover, messengers are sent to the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom inviting them to participate and to return to "Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," that he may return to those who have escaped the Assyrians." While the framework of this episode may be historical, again the theology is certainly that of the Chronicler.[1] This is a rather remarkable concern for a period in Judaism usually regarded as extremely narrow and self-contained. The perspective of this episode certainly approaches that of the book of Ruth.

Finally there is the great confession of sin by Ezra in Neh. 9:6ff., a "marvellous expression of God's continued faithfulness to the covenant despite the nation's equally continued apostasy."[2] With reference to Abraham "Ezra" says in 9:7-8:

> You are Yahweh, the God who chose Abram and brought him forth from Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham and you found his heart faithful before you and made with him the covenant to give to his descendents the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have established your words because you are righteous.[3]

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[1] Myers, II Chronicles, p. 177.

[2] Myers, Ezra-Nehemiah ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 167.

[3] For Ur the Septuagint has "country, place," (χώρα), as in Genesis 11. The Vulgate has "fire," probably reflecting the widespread later legend of Abraham in the fiery furnace. Cf. Myers, Ezra-Nehemiah, p. 159.

Significantly reference is made to the covenant with Abraham as the guarantee of election. The Chronicler does not, however, refer to a covenant at Sinai. Rather at Sinai Moses was given "right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments" (9:13) and the authority by which the oath sworn to the fathers was to be fulfilled. The Chronicler can speak of later kings and peoples making covenants with God, but from the divine side God made with Israel simply the covenant with Abraham, and that endures.[1] This is very much similar to the covenantal understanding of the Priestly writers and the post-exilic and exilic prophets, though in this situation perhaps there is greater focus on the possession of the land, understandable in light of the historical context. The Chronicler obviously knows and makes use of the Priestly edition of the Pentateuch, as seen in the reference to the Abrahamic name change. There is another statement in the "Ezra" confession which had received little elaboration outside the epics, but would soon be considerably expanded by the Chronicler's successors in the retelling of the Abraham story. This is the reference (Neh. 9:7), admittedly slight, to Abraham's response to the divine promise: ". . . and you found his heart faithful before you." The trials of Abraham and his faithfulness when tested receive elaborate treatment in the intertestamental literature.

Attention has already been drawn to the last of the Chronicler's references in the Abraham tradition. This is the identification of the site of the Temple in Jerusalem with the place of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22). We have argued that this identification was probably first made by the Chronicler or his circle. In II Chr. 3:1 the writer says: "Then Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah . . . ." It is significant that here the Septuagint has a different expression (ἐν ὄρει τοῦ Ἀμορία) from that which appears in Genesis 22 (εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν ὑψηλήν). We have already noted the need to relate the patriarchal tradition geographically to Jerusalem, particularly in view of the fact that most places associated with the patriarchal traditions were in the Chronicler's time in Samaritan territory. The Chronicler's midrash was soon accepted and became a part of the central stream of tradition.

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[1] *Contra* Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. I, p. 64.

Abraham in the Psalms

The interest in Abraham is very slight indeed in the Psalter as a whole. Reference is made to him in only two of the entire 150 psalms. These two psalms, 47 and 105, are discussed here in a separate section because of the difficulty of the dating of the psalms accurately.

Psalm 47 is a psalm of Yahweh's enthronement. The precise nature and origin of the enthronement festival cannot be discussed here, but its presence within the cult is generally acknowledged.[1] In this psalm the rule of God embraces one great people of God:

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[1] Anderson, pp. 481-484.

> God reigns over the nations;
> God sits on his holy throne.
> The princes of the people gather
>   as the people of the God of Abraham.
> For the shields of the earth belong to God;
>   He is highly exalted" (47:8-9).

A. Weiser writes: "It is evidence of the theocentric perspective of the psalm, which is entirely absorbed in its enthusiasm for the majesty of God, that it regards all distinctions to be annulled in the sight of God and ungrudgingly classes the converted Gentiles with the people of the God of Abraham."[1] While this psalm cannot be precisely dated, its point of view is closest to that of the exilic and post-exilic prophecy which we have discussed and to certain other post-exilic books such as Ruth and Jonah.[2]

Psalm 105 is a cultic recital of *Heilsgeschichte* from the time of the patriarchs to the entrance into Canaan. It is classified by Weiser as a hymn for the Covenant Festival.[3] The similarity in content to Joshua 24 is quite clear. In 105:6 the congregation is addressed as the "offspring of Abraham, his servant, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones." In the next section of the psalm God is described as one faithful to his patriarchal covenant, "the covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant." This promise is focused in verse 11 on the gift of the land. In verses 12-15 the psalmist refers to the wanderings of the patriarchs and God's protection of them. The patriarchs are here described as God's anointed ones and prophets (cf. Genesis 20:7 - Elohist). Interestingly, however, the one patriarch who is singled out for particular mention is not Abraham, but Joseph (who is never included in the traditional three: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).[1] The rest of the psalm is primarily concerned with the Exodus and the provision for the people in the wilderness. This God did for his people "for he remembered his holy promise and Abraham his servant," (105:42). The proper response to this promise and provision is "that they should keep his statutes and observe his instructions," the goal of God in electing and providing for his people. This psalm may possibly be pre-exilic. Its mood is in some ways similar to that of the Deuteronomists. The purpose of the psalmist is not reassurance to disconsolate people, but rather a strong moral demand for obedience.

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[1] Weiser, *The Psalms*, tr. Herbert Hartwell ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1962), pp. 378-379. See also William R. Taylor and W. Steward McCollough, "The Book of Psalms: Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols. New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), IV, 247. The novel conjecture of Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*,I ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 283-286 and 112, denying this interpretation on the basis of assumed but unattested verb roots is unconvincing, particularly in view of the content of the rest of the psalm. The Septuagint (46:10) has μετὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἀβραάμ .

[2] Clements, p. 64, argues that this psalm is "certainly of pre-exilic date." This, however, may be special pleading in view of his major thesis.

[3] Weiser, *The Psalms*, p. 674.

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[1] This may well support Mowinckel's thesis of the close relationship between temple poets and singers and the wisdom schools and teachers, Joseph being clearly a wisdom hero. Cf. "Psalms and Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* ("Supplements to Vetus Testamentum," III; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), pp. 205-224.

Conclusion

The Abraham tradition had its beginning in the preliterary traditions of the God of the Fathers. There is strong evidence to support the position that the tradition was enlarged and popularized through a process of assimilation during the period of oral transmission. It was given literary form by the Yahwist in the period of the Davidic-Solomonic empire. In the combined JE epic it expressed the confidence of that period in relationship to the promise of land, progeny, and blessing to the nations. There is reason to believe that the tradition was closely allied with the theology of the Jerusalem court and cult. At the same time it should be noted that in the epic presentation Abraham is not only the first and the representative in faith, but also in unbelief, freedom, and anxiety.[1]

The tradition of the father of Israel was then reflected upon in each new age of Israel's experience. From the total stock of tradition concerning Abraham each interpreter took those portions and dimensions of the tradition which were most useful and meaningful for his own time. While writers in a period of national glory saw the fulfillment of the patriarchal tradition in the Davidic monarchy, the Deuteronomists placed the fulfillment at Horeb and used the tradition as the foundation for pleas for obedience in response to grace. The exilic and post-exilic writers in a time of national guilt found in the patriarchal tradition an unshakable foundation for a theology of grace. At the same time many of these post-exilic writers were able to relate the patriarchal tradition to a remarkable universalism. In the succeeding historical periods of Israel's experiences there would be continuing reflection upon the ancient tradition as interpreters drew upon the numerous elements of the Abraham tradition within the Hebrew Scriptures.

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[1] Herbert Werner, Abraham: Der Erstling und Repräsentant Israels ("Exempla Biblica," I; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965), p. 89.

CHAPTER II

INTERTESTAMENTAL JEWISH LITERATURE

This chapter is concerned with the rather extensive collection of Jewish literature of the so-called intertestamental period (though some of the documents were written before the latest of the later canonized books and some are contemporary with New Testament writings). The _terminus ad quem_ is set at the end of the Second Jewish Revolt. Not only does this mark a significant point in rabbinic tradition (the death of Akiba), but it is also probable that most, if not all, of the New Testament writings had been completed by this time.

The traditional distinction between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism which has been followed by many students of Jewish intertestamental literature is in many cases a very questionable one, particularly in light of the spectacular discoveries in the Judean desert. Manuscripts originating in Palestine and written in a Semitic language were soon circulated in Greek translation outside Palestine. At the same time the discovery of Greek documents in the Dead Sea region indicates that the literary traffic moved in both directions. In examining the documents of this period our concern is more closely focused on the _use_ of a particular book (i. e., the relative extent of its circulation) rather than on the precise circle from which the document originated. It is far more significant for this study to know how early and how widespread a particular Abrahamic tradition was than to enter into some of the intricacies of scholarly debate on the circle of Jewish piety ultimately responsible for the origin of a book.

The documents of this period which are usually classified as apocrypha and pseudepigrapha (with the exception of II, III, and IV Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon) will be examined first. There is reason to believe that these documents in most cases enjoyed fairly wide circulation both in Palestine and in the Diaspora. Then other documents which appear to have been more localized in their circulation and influence will be examined.

General Apocrypha and Pseudepigrahpa

It was suggested in the first chapter that certain crises in the life of Israel brought to prominence aspects of the Abraham tradition present from an early period. It was also suggested that new historical and theological situations determined which portions of the whole body of ancient Abraham tradition received emphasis and shaped the retelling of the tradition. Although it is exceedingly difficult to date many of the intertestamental documents precisely, it is still possible to examine these documents from this perspective within broad limits. Two historical crises easily provide points of demarcation: the Maccabean revolt and the Jewish War of

66-70 A. D. The situation surrounding these crises in particular seems to account for much of the direction which the interpretation of Abraham took during the intertestamental period.

The pre-Maccabean literature. There are three documents dealing with the Abraham tradition which seem clearly to date from the period preceding the Maccabean revolt. The earliest of these is the Septuagint translation of the scriptures by Alexandrian Jews. While the other two, the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira and Tobit, can hardly be said to have extensive interest in the Abraham tradition, they do presage matters which would soon receive major emphasis.

Because the factor of interpretation is a part of every translation the Septuagint must be examined for significant differences from the manuscript tradition represented by the Masoretic text. At the same time all differences cannot necessarily be assumed to be deliberate modifications of the meaning of the text. Some differences may be explained by the existence of a different Hebrew _Vorlage_ in use by the Alexandrian translators. The agreement of some Hebrew texts at Qumran with the Septuagint readings should make the commentator on the Septuagint cautious in positing deliberate modifications. At the same time the very presence of Septuagint manuscripts at Qumran enlarges considerably the whole question of the use and distribution of this Greek translation.[1]

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[1] Eissfeldt, pp. 707-8. The question of the evolution of the Septuagint text is complicated. The two main points of view are represented by Paul Kahle, who posits many targum-like

Despite the romantic tradition of the Letter of Aristeas it is generally acknowledged that the Septuagint was a product of practical necessity for synagogue use rather than the result of a royal proclamation.[1] The Torah appears to have been translated in the middle or late part of the third century B. C. and the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures (or at least most of them) by ca. 132 B. C.[2] Although the translations of the various books differ considerably in degree of literalness, the translation of the Abraham materials in Genesis appears to be quite faithful to the meaning of the Hebrew text.

In these stories sometimes words are omitted or transliterated when the translator did not understand the Hebrew.[3]

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rescensions evolving into a standard text, and Paul de Legarde, who posits a late corruption of an early single text of individual books. This study relies upon the critical edition of Alfred Rahlfs (who follows de Legarde). The Rahlfs edition is based upon the principles or similar ones which underlie the Göttingen edition of the Septuagint, but limits itself generally to the witness of Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus (Eissfeldt, p. 715). See further P. Katz, "Septuagintal Studies in the Mid-Century," *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd), ed. W. D. Davies and David Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 176-208.

[1] Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p.36. Also H. St. John Thackery, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 12. Elias J. Bickerman, "The Septuagint as a Translation," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XXVIII (1959), 7ff., continues, however, the traditional position that this was a royal edition.

[2] Würtwein, p. 36. Thackery, p. 11. See Prologue to the Greek translation of ben Sira's book by his grandson.

[3] The Hebrew משק = possession, is simply Masek in the Septuagint (Gen. 15:2).

Place names are sometimes translated,[1] but often simply transliterated. Occasionally phrases from parallel stories are assimilated.[2] The sophisticated Priestly structure of successive revelations of the nature of God with the succession of the names of God is not carried through in the Septuagint translation of the Torah. It appears, e. g., that in Gen. 17:1 and Ex. 6:3 the translator either did not understand 'El Shaddai himself or wished to avoid misunderstanding. It has already been pointed out that the Moriah of Gen. 22:2 appears in the Septuagint simply as ὑψηλήν.[3] Among the more significant divergences from the Masoretic text tradition are: the description of Abraham as βασιλεῦς in Gen. 23:6, and the description of his sitting with the birds (rather than driving them off) in Gen. 15:11.[4] Thus it appears that most of the differences between the Abraham tradition as presented in the Hebrew text and the Greek translation are matters of translation difficulties and peculiarities.[5] There are no major theological differences in the presentation of this particular tradition. Some of the minor differences did, however, prove useful to Hellenistic writers in further refraction of the Abraham tradition (e. g., in presenting Abraham as a philosopher king).

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[1] e.g. Beersheba and Machpelah.

[2] In Gen. 20:2 a verse appears to have been assimilated from the Isaac doublet.

[3] Chapter I, p. 29. The Septuagint text of II Chronicles 3:1 has Ἀμορία, which may possibly mean "Amorite," if the spelling of Genesis 14:13 (with one ρ rather than the usual two) may be applied here.

[4] The Septuagint apparently reads the verb as coming from ישב rather than נשב.

[5] Other important readings to be noted in translation of Abraham passages are:
(a) The Hebrew זרע is always rendered in the singular, σπέρμα.

The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira is the work of a teacher in Jerusalem who greatly admired the priestly establishment and was at the same time one in whose work the streams of law and wisdom "came together in one great flowing river."[1] Reasoning from the dating of the Greek translation of his work in Egypt by his grandson ca. 132 B. C., one dates his activity ca. 190 B. C.[2] He is vexed by Edomites, Philistines (Greeks), and Samaritans (50:26), but his attacks on Hellenism are indirect

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(b) חסד is often (e.g., Gen. 24:12) rendered by ἔλεος, but at least once (Gen. 24:27) by δικαιοσύνη.
(c) Gen. 31:53, of which Alt, p. 19, makes much, has a singular verb for the subject, the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, whereas the Masoretic text has a plural verb followed by "the God of their father," a phrase conjectured by the editor of the Genesis text of Biblia Hebraica as a late addition.
(d) In Gen. 17:14, possibly an assimilation from vs. 12, it is said that anyone who is not circumcised on the eighth day shall be cut off from his people. The Masoretic text lacks "on the eighth day."
(f) Hebrew אור is consistently translated χώρα (assuming ארץ ?).

Within the Prophets the single mention of Abraham in Jeremiah in the Masoretic text is in that portion of Jeremiah which is missing in the Septuagint. Isaiah 29:22 reads "concerning the house of Jacob which he separated out of Abraham." In the Writings there is at the end of Job (Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Venetus) a statement "from the Syriac book" which links Job by genealogy to Esau and ultimately to Abraham.

[1] Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1949), p. 385.

[2] Eissfeldt, p. 597.

through exaltation of Israel's ancient and authentic heritage.[1] Not only is the Greek translation of this work found in Septuagint manuscripts, but also approximately two-thirds of the Hebrew text was discovered in the Cairo Geniza and there are fragments of the Hebrew text from Qumran and Masada which are basically identical with the Geniza manuscripts.[2]

In chapters 44-50 of ben Sira, the section in praise of men of piety,[3] Abraham figures with the heroes of Israel from Adam and Enoch to the high priest Simon II, a contemporary of ben Sira. In 44:19-21 Abraham is described as the great father of a multitude of nations and without blemish.[4] He kept the Law of the Most High and was in covenant with him. In his flesh he established a covenant and in testing he was found faithful. *Therefore*,[5] (italics mine) the Lord assured him of the blessing of the nations, the exaltation of his seed, and the inheritance of the land. The same assurance is given to Isaac "for the sake of Abraham his father" (44:21).[6]

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[1] Pfeiffer, *History*, p. 371.

[2] Eissfeldt, p. 599. J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea*, tr. John Strugnell ("Studies in Biblical Theology," No. 26; Napierville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1959; hereafter cited as *Ten Years*), p. 32. Yigael Yadin, *Masada*, tr. Moshe Pearlman (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 178.

[3] Hebrew: אנשי חסד. Septuagint: ἄνδρας ἐνδόξους.

[4] Following the Hebrew (which is followed by the Syriac), *contra* Septuagint. Hebrew: לא נתן בכבודו מום; Septuagint: καὶ οὐκ εὑρέθη ὅμοιος.

[5] Hebrew: על כן; Septuagint: διὰ τοῦτο.

[6] Hebrew: בעבור; Septuagint: δι'. The Masada text breaks off at 44:17c, Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada*, (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1965), p. 49.

The priestly sympathies of ben Sira are quite evident in the fact that so much space in this section is devoted to the treatment of Aaron (over three times as much attention as he gives to Moses), Phineas, and, above all, to Simon II.[1] His continuity with the theology of the Priestly writers is probably seen also in the use of the term, "covenant," with reference to Abraham, Noah, Phineas, Aaron, and David only. He does not use it with reference to Moses in 45:5 (Hebrew text).[2] With Moses he uses חקיו, "his statutes."

Ben Sira makes clear reference to Abraham's testing in Gen. 22, the result of which was the reaffirmation of the covenant promise.[3] There is, of course, the possibility that the passage in ben Sira 44:21 could be said to imply a doctrine of merit, but this is also a possibility in the JE materials of Genesis, as we have seen (e. g., Gen. 26:5).[4]

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[1] It seems fruitless to attempt to classify him as a Sadducee or Pharisee. See Bruce Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 87.

[2] Ben Sira's grandson does use διαθήκη, apparently missing the subtlety of the Priestly writer.

[3] The Hebrew has here a qal passive participle; the Greek has a singular noun.

[4] The Hebrew of manuscript B of the Cairo Geniza has a thanksgiving in chapter 51 addressed to the Shield of Abraham, Rock of Isaac, and Mighty One of Jacob quite similar to parts of the Shemoneh 'Esreh. The omission in the Septuagint and Syriac probably indicate that this is not original. See G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley, "Sirach," The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. R. H. Charles (2 vols.; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913; hereafter cited as A&P), I, 514-15.

The other document which seems clearly to belong to the pre-Maccabean period is Tobit, which is generally dated in the first quarter of the second century B. C.[1] Its origin in a Semitic language has been confirmed by the discovery of three Aramaic manuscripts and a Hebrew one at Qumran (both following the longer recension attested by Sinaiticus and the Old Latin).[2] Whether originating in Palestine or in the Eastern Diaspora,[3] it reflects a quietist piety loyal to the traditions of the fathers. There is no significant concern with Abraham in this book. In the recension represented by Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, in 4:12 (4:6b-19 being missing in the Sinaiticus recension) Abraham, along with Noah, Isaac, and Jacob, is held up as an example to Tobias to marry within the family as a true Jew. All Jews are described as sons of the prophets and piety is presented as insuring prosperity. In the Sinaiticus manuscript in 14:17 (but not in the Vaticanus-Alexandrinus recension) there is a reference to the ingathering of the Diaspora ἐν τῆ γῆ Ἀβρααμ. While Vaticanus-Alexandrinus is not so explicit, both recensions relate the events of the ingathering of the Jews to the turning of the Gentiles to God from idols. This prediction, which forms part of Tobit's final counsel to his son before his death, in itself reflects something of the universalistic understanding of the patriarchal tradition.

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[1] Metzger, p. 31. Pfeiffer, History, p. 274-75. Eissfeldt, p. 584.

[2] Milik, p. 31. The view of D. C. Simpson in A&P, I, 174, that the book is of Egyptian origin in Aramaic with later translations into Greek and then Hebrew, can hardly be supported.

[3] Eissfeldt, p. 585.

Thus an examination of the intertestamental documents which can be dated prior to the Maccabean crisis reveals no outstanding interest in Abraham. It can hardly be said that these documents enlarge upon the Hebrew scriptural tradition or present any exegetical innovations. The mention of Abraham (among others) as an example in choosing a wife is, however, almost predictive of an interest in him which would flourish in the next period under consideration.

Literature from the Maccabean period to the end of the Jewish War.

Most of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature under consideration appears to have been written in the period between the beginning of the Maccabean revolt and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem at the conclusion of the Jewish War. Because of the large number of documents in this period which treat the Abraham tradition, the difficulty in precise dating within this period, and also because the concern with Abraham is concentrated in a few major themes, it is advantageous to discuss the traditions topically. In this period of rule by Hasmonean priest-kings, Herods, and Roman procurators there are significant developments in the treatment of the Abraham theme alongside the retention of older emphases. The struggle for independence and freedom from the Seleucids, the brief period of Hasmonean stability, and the incorporation of the Jewish commonwealth into the vast reality of the Roman Empire may be seen to account for the direction which the treatment of Abraham took in the literature of this period. Whereas the post-exilic prophets and the Priestly writers focused primarily on Abraham as the recipient of God's grace and as the anchor of the everlasting covenant, there is now in this period considerable interest upon the figure of Abraham as an example of faithfulness in testing and obedience in all things--the model of Jewish piety under all circumstances. While the older emphases continue, such as the notion of the God of the fathers and the nature of the promise to the patriarchs, Abraham himself, as an historical figure, receives attention to an extent far greater than was the case at any time since the writing of the Yahwist epic.

Abraham's faithfulness when tested. The author of Judith, whose work is generally regarded as a Palestinian product of the Maccabean uprising,[1] finds in the examples of the fathers models of faithfulness during the historical-theological crisis of his own time. He says that the fathers were "put to the test" to "search their hearts" (8:24-27). When Uzziah promises to surrender the city of Bethulia, Judith counsels:

> Remember what (literally "how much" or "how many things" - plural) he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Mesopotamia in Syria, while he was keeping the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother (8:26, RSV).[2]

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[1] Eissfeldt, p. 587. Pfeiffer, History, p. 295. Metzger, p. 43.

[2] The meaning implicit in the use of the plural (ὅσα) is explicit in the haggadah of Abraham's Ten Trials, found at least as early as Jubilees.

The author implies that the sufferings of the Maccabean crisis are educative and that they are not themselves as great as those endured by the patriarchs.

This same point of view is expressed in I Maccabees. This document is generally dated near the death of John Hyrcanus (134-103 B. C.). In this work of a Palestinian writer, translated early into Greek,[1] Abraham is again the model of faithfulness in testing. In 2:52 the writer asks: Was not Abraham found faithful in testing, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. The wording of the last clause is identical with that of Gen. 15:6. There is, however, a significant modification in emphasis. In Gen. 15:6 Abraham's belief was reckoned to him as righteousness--before he was tested. Here in I Maccabees the reckoning of righteousness comes as a result of his faithfulness when tested. This is a departure from both the Yahwist-Elohist narrative and the Priestly redaction of the patriarchal tradition. The author of I Maccabees, however, consistently applies this point of view to other heroes. He says in 2:57 that David inherited his throne ἐν τῷ ἐλέει, which in context can only mean "because he was merciful."

In the Book of Jubilees the tradition of Abraham's faithfulness in testing is expanded by the haggadah of the Ten Trials of Abraham. The origins of this book are problematic. While known earlier only in Greek fragments, Ethiopic and Latin translations,[1] nine fragmentary manuscripts in Hebrew have been found at Qumran,[2] as well as a Hebrew fragment at Masada.[3] Scholars have noted points of affinity with the Damascus Document.[4] Bent Noack, however, has cautiously and judiciously insisted that the discovery of the fragments at Qumran ultimately proves nothing more than their use there; Qumran was not necessarily the place of origin.[5] A date sometime in the latter part of the second century B. C. seems probable.[6] Michael Testuz argues convincingly that this writer for whom priestly and cultic interests are so important was an Essene "of ancient observance," writing before that sect had retired from national life.[7]

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[1] Eissfeldt, p. 579. Pfeiffer, History, p. 491. Metzger, p. 130.

In the telling of the sacrifice of Isaac the author of

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[1] Charles, "The Book of Jubilees," *A&P*, II, 2-4.

[2] Eissfeldt, pp. 607-8.

[3] Yadin, *Masada*, p. 179.

[4] Eissfeldt, pp. 607-8.

[5] Bent Noack, "Qumran and the Book of Jubilees," *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*, XXII-XXIII (1957-58), 194.

[6] Pfeiffer, *History*, p. 70, D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* ("The Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 54. Eissfeldt, pp. 607-8. Milik, p. 32. Michel Testuz, *Les idées religieuses du Livre des Jubilés* (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1960), p. 7. W. F. Albright's dating in the third century (cited in Tesutz, p. 38) and the pre-Hellenistic dating of Solomon Zeitlin, *The Book of Jubilees* (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1939), p. v, are not convincing to most scholars.

[7] Testuz, p. 33. He takes 1:7-25, 28; 23:11-32; 24:28b-30 as late redactions within the same community from which the document originated. Cf. pp. 41-42.

Jubilees discusses the multiple testing of Abraham and his constant faithfulness. Jubilees 17:15-18 represents a significant change from the Biblical account, analogous to the Chronicler's handling of the census of David. In this passage Mastema proposes to God that Abraham should be put to the proof, suggesting that Abraham loves Isaac above all. God agrees, but knows that Abraham will be faithful to him on the basis of his previous testings.

> And the Lord knew that Abraham was faithful in all his afflictions; for he had tried him through his country and with famine, and had tried him with the wealth of kings, and had tried him again through his wife, when she was torn (from him), and with circumcision; and had tried him through Ishmael and Hagar, his maidservant, when he sent them away. And in everything wherein he had tried him, he was found faithful, and his soul was not impatient, and he was not slow to act; for he was faithful and a lover of the Lord (Jubilees 17:17-18, Charles translation).

As with the Chronicler, the place of the sacrifice of Isaac (certainly the most significant testing of Abraham for this author) is Mt. Zion (18:13). Of considerable significance is the fact that the writer of Jubilees dates the Passover as the anniversary of the sacrifice of Isaac (see 17:15-16; 18:3; 19:1; 49:1). As Geza Vermes suggests: "Although the intention of the author of Jubilees was to prove the patriarchal origin of the Jewish feasts, his dating of the Passover on the anniversary of Isaac's sacrifice was certainly not fortuitous."[1]

Finally the death of Sarah is described as Abraham's tenth trial (19:8), although ten separate ones are not actually described in Jubilees.[1] Again Abraham is found faithful when tested. In none of the passages discussing the trials of Abraham is there serious departure from the Genesis narrative. The author of Jubilees simply brings together parts of the Genesis narrative and portrays the entire life of Abraham as one of faithfulness in trials sent to him.

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[1] G. Vermes, Scripture and Tradition in Judaism ("Studia Post-Biblica," Vol. IV; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), p. 215.

Abraham as example of perfect piety. From this perspective of Abraham's obedient faithfulness when tested there is the further development in a number of documents that Abraham becomes the pattern for obedience in every aspect of life and not simply in clear crises. This ultimately leads to statements of his blamelessness and to modification by omissions of incidents in the Genesis tradition which would reflect adversely upon the patriarch. Abraham is presented as a theologically sophisticated monotheist and perfect keeper of all of the regulations of the pre-existent Torah, even of all the teachings known only from the oral tradition (e. g. Jubilees 16:31).[2]

As early as the book of Judith (5:6-9), in the report of the Ammonite Achior to Holofernes, mention is made of 'the fathers' (without explicitly naming Abraham) leaving Chaldea because they rejected the polytheism of their ancestor. Achior tells Holofernes that the Jews are invincible so long as they keep the law of the God of Heaven, the God they have come to know (5:21). The implications are obvious if this book is to be dated during the crisis precipitated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

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[1] See R. H. Charles, The Book of Jubilees (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), p. 109.

[2] Eissfeldt, p. 607.

As observed earlier, the haggadic treatment is extensive in Jubilees. Abraham, a wonder child in Ur, who can protect crops from birds and invent agricultural machinery (11:21-24), becomes a monotheist at the age of fourteen (11:16). He burns the idols which Terah his father worships (12:1-14), and when the family has arrived at Haran he turns from astrology declaring that the signs of the heavenly bodies are all in the hands of the Lord (12:15-20).

More than this, Abraham appears as one who faithfully keeps and teaches the moral and cultic laws of the Israelites long before they are promulgated by Moses. This, however, appears simply to be an haggadic exposition of the point of view taught earlier by ben Sira, viz., that the Torah of Israel is identical to the pre-existent Wisdom of God. That this is clearly the case is indicated in the insistence of the writer of Jubilees that Abraham learned and transcribed the books of the fathers. In order to do this he learned Hebrew from an angel, the use of this language having ceased since the building of the Tower of Babel (12:25-27). This is further supported by the statement that although Abraham began the practice of the covenant sign of circumcision among the Israelites, it was an eternal ordinance written on heavenly tablets and existing among the two highest orders of angels, who were created circumcised (15:25-27). Even Abraham's institution of the Feast of

Tabernacles is "according to the testimony of the heavenly tablets" (16:28-29). The basic theological perspective of Jubilees is that Torah is eternal. This being so, Abraham, the father of Israel, in his perfect piety would have followed eternal Torah in every case. The eternality of Torah itself robs Moses of any ultimate contribution as lawgiver, but the haggadist is certainly consistent with the doctrine of pre-existent Torah and is not creating *de novo*.

Much of the concern of Jubilees with Abraham's obedience is with cultic matters (though there are some references to his moral judgments, e. g., in Joseph's experience in Potiphar's house, 25:7, and in the Judah-Tamar episode, 41:28). Abraham renews the Feast of Weeks (possibly understood by the writer as the Feast of Oaths),[1] which had been discontinued since the time of Noah when it was instituted in the context of the Noachian covenant (14:14-20; cf. 6:16-20).[2] Further Abraham's giving of tithes (curiously not to Melchizedek) puts into practice this eternal ordinance for Israel (13:25-26). It is *in the process of sacrificing* that God appears to Abraham to establish his covenant with him (ch. 15). Finally it is significant that the writer of Jubilees represents Abraham's dying words to Isaac as detailed prescriptions relating to sacrifice (ch. 21).[1]

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[1] See Zeitlin, *The Book of Jubilees*, p. 6, and Tesutz, p. 148, concerning the meaning of שבועות.

[2] See Milik, *Ten Years*, pp. 117-18 concerning the possible significance of this tradition of the Feast of Pentecost for the Pentecost pericope in the Acts of Apostles.

In order to present Abraham in the best possible light the writer of Jubilees modifies the Genesis tradition in much the same way as the Chronicler before him had modified the David-Solomon tradition. He omits the deception of Pharaoh by Abraham, the intercession for the Sodomites and the Abimelech episode. In 19:11 he explains that Abraham married Keturah after Sarah's death rather than taking Hagar back because Hagar had died earlier. It is also pointed out in 19:16 that Abraham's love of Jacob was not artibrary--he saw the deeds of Esau.[2] It must be said, at the same time, that this modification of the Genesis account of Abraham is far less radical than ~~is~~ its treatment of Jacob. In 35:6 Rebekah's last words to Jacob are that she has never seen in him any perverseness, but only upright deeds.[3]

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[1] The details of the circumcision requirement, i. e., the exclusion of the male who is not circumcised on the eighth day, follow the tradition represented by the Septuagint rather than that of the Masoretic text. This probably is explained by a different Vorlage and is certainly a legitimate inference from other statements in Gen. 17. Testuz, pp. 17-18, indicates a number of other places where Jubilees agrees with the Septuagint over against the Masoretic text, e.g., 2:16; 5:32.

[2] In Genesis Jacob and Esau are fifteen years old when Abraham dies, but they are not introduced into the story until after Abraham's death has been narrated.

[3] The omission of the figure of Melchizedek is a special problem. Charles, The Book of Jubilees, p. 95, suspects a lacuna. This omission could, however, be a deliberate excision by an anti-Hasmonean redactor. This would be a good probability if the Hasmonean priest-kings saw in Melchizedek the precedent for their joining of these two offices. Cf. Testuz's view that there were late redactors of Jubilees within the same community which produced the book.

The Damascus Document, generally dated in the first century B. C.,[1] also presents Abraham as the keeper and teacher of the commandments, the obedient friend of God. This document is known from discoveries in the Cairo Geniza and from at least eight copies found at Qumran.[2] The precise relationship of this document to Jubilees is not altogether clear, but they seem to come from the same theological milieu or certainly a similar one, and both were at least used by the Qumran people. In the Damascus Document, in a description of a long history of Israel's disobedience, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are presented as the only exceptions:

> Abraham did not walk in this
> and was rai(sed to be a Fr)iend of God
> because he kept the commandments of God
> and did not choose the will of his own spirit.
> And he handed them down to Isaac and Jacob who kept them
> and were inscribed as friends of God
> and party to the covenant forever (III:2 in Dupont-Sommer's numbering and translation).[3]

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[1] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran, tr. Geza Vermes (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961), p. 120. Charles, "The Fragments of a Zadokite Work," A&P, II, 785. Otto Betz, "Zadokite Fragments," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, (4 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, 933. Eissfeldt, p. 650, dates it between 150 B. C. and 68 A. D. H. H. Rowley, The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 77, dates it ca. 131 B. C. Solomon Zeitlin, The Zadokite Fragments ("The Jewish Quarterly Review Monograph Series", No. 1; Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1952), p. 21, takes the erratic and untenable view of Karaitic origin.

[2] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings, pp. 115-16. Eissfeldt, p. 650. Milik, p. 38.

[3] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings, p. 125, = Charles 4:2-3. Translation is almost identical except that Charles (A&P, II, 806), has "recorded" where Dupont-Sommer has "raised."

Also another reference in the Damascus Document indicates that the returning of a man to the Law of Moses drives the Angel of Hostility away, for which reason Abraham was circumcised on the day when he knew (XVI:4b).[1] Perhaps this means that obedience overcomes the power of evil and that the covenant sign was for Abraham an expression of his awareness of this.

In the section of I (Ethiopic) Enoch called the Apocalypse of Weeks and generally dated in the Maccabean period,[2] Abraham also appears as a pre-eminently righteous man. This document, known earlier only in Greek fragments, and Ethiopic and Latin versions, has now been found in a number of Aramaic manuscript fragments at Qumran (though excluding the section of I Enoch known as the Similitudes or Parables).[3] The writer of the Apocalypse of Weeks in his prediction of the course of history says: "And after that in the third week at its close a man shall be elected as the plant of righteous judgment. And his posterity shall become the plant of righteousness for evermore" (93:5).

So complete is Abraham's obedience within certain circles of tradition current in this period that a number of documents speak of his blamelessness, as did ben Sira (Hebrew text) at an earlier time. Jubilees speaks of him as perfect in all his deeds before the Lord and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life (23:10). Indeed it is said that the only reason for his premature death (i.e., before the completion of four jubilees) was the universal wickedness of man which took its toll even on the righteous Abraham (vicariously?). The Prayer of Manasseh, whose original language and date remains in dispute,[1] also speaks of Abraham's blamelessness. In the prayer (vs. 8) Manasseh acknowledges his own need for repentance, though repentance was not appointed for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against God.

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[1] 20:2 in Charles, A&P.

[2] Charles, "I Enoch," A&P, II, 171. Russell, p. 53. Pfeiffer, History, p. 77.

[3] Milik, Ten Years, pp. 33-34. Charles, "I Enoch," A&P, II, 166-67.

Continuation of earlier emphases. The earlier post-exilic emphasis on Abraham as the anchor of the covenant with Israel is continued during this period alongside the developments which have been discussed above. There is appeal to the divine promises to Abraham and his seed and reference also to the God of the Fathers. There is considerable appeal to the promise to Abraham and his seed in Jubilees (e.g., 15:1-10; 18:14-19; 22:24; 24:10-11, 22; 25:11-23; 26:24; 27:11-12; 31:7; 36:3; 48:8; in the last reference the plagues upon the Egyptians came for the sake of the covenant with Abraham). This is true also to a lesser extent in the Damascus Document, I (Apocryphal) Baruch, Psalms of Solomon, Prayer of Azariah, and the Assumption of Moses.

In the Damascus Document I:4 and VI:2 (Dupont-Sommer's numbering)[1] the remnant is preserved because of the remembrance of the covenant of the forefathers. It is clear, however, in VIII:17b[2] that the covenant of the fathers is applied only to the Damascus Document sectarians. At the same time it is a retention of a somewhat broader dimension in that Jewish slaves are not to be sold because they are included in the Abrahamic covenant (XIII:10b).[3]

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[1] Pfeiffer, History, pp. 459-60 posits Hebrew and first century B. C. Herbert Ryle, "The Prayer of Manasses," A&P, I, 612, 614, posits a late date and Greek original. Eissfeldt, p. 588, posits Greek original and indicates a late date and possible Christian origin.

In I (Apocryphal) Baruch, which was probably written in Hebrew in the second or first century B. C.,[4] in a discussion of the covenant there is an explicit denial of a doctrine of merits of the fathers. The Babylonian exiles send a gift to the high priest in Jerusalem and entreat him to pray to God for them and to claim his promise to return his people to the land sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, restoring them under an everlasting covenant (2:34-35). Israel prays for mercy (2:19) not on account of the merits of the fathers, but for God's honor (2:14) and the covenant (2:34).[5] The Prayer of Azariah in the longer version of Daniel, which dates probably from the second or first century B. C. and was probably in a Semitic tongue originally,[1] includes a petition that God will not withdraw his mercy for his name's sake and on account of Abraham, his beloved, Isaac, his servant, and Israel, his holy one, with an appeal to the promise to make their seed as the stars and sand (vs. 12).

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[1] 1:4 and 8:3 in Charles, A&P.

[2] 9:25 in Charles, A&P.

[3] 14:11 in Charles, A&P.

[4] Eissfeldt, p. 593. Pfeiffer, History, pp. 416-17. Contra O. C. Whitehouse, "I Baruch," A&P, I, 569, 575-76, who dates it in first century A. D. in Hebrew and Greek.

[5] This may indicate tensions within Judaism on the question of the merits of the fathers. See section on rabbinic literature infra.

The Psalms of Solomon, which are believed to have been written in Hebrew in Pharisaic circles in the first century B. C.,[2] contain similar treatments of the Abraham tradition. In Psalm of Solomon 9 there is a plea to God not to reject his people, but to show pity because of the election of Abraham and the covenant with the fathers. The same psalm speaks of the election of the seed of Abraham rather than[3] all the nations (9:17). In Psalm of Solomon 18 the psalmist assures that the punishments which come upon Abraham's seed are redemptive in purpose. Finally the Assumption of Moses predicts the future exile under Nebuchadnezzar and the mourning and crying of the exiles to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to remember the patriarchal covenant (3:9; cf. 11:18), a covenant which (12:13) will not allow the complete rooting out of evil men. This document probably was written in a Semitic tongue near the time of the death of Herod the Great, although it survives only in translations.[1]

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[1] Pfeiffer, History, p. 442. Metzger, p. 100. W. H. Bennett, "The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children," A&P, I, 629. Eissfeldt, p. 590, says there is no way to date this. Theodotian's text, which is usually found in Septuagint manuscripts, and the Septuagint text itself, where it exists, are almost identical in form and meaning here.

[2] Eissfeldt, pp. 611-12. Pfeiffer, History, p. 63. Russell, pp. 57-58. G. B. Gray, "The Psalms of Solomon," A&P, II, 625.

[3] Following the translation from the Syriac by Rendel Harris and Alphonse Mingana, The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, (2 vols.; Manchester: The University Press, 1920), II, 422. See William Jennings, Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 98, on use of ܩܕܡ. This is consistent with the attitude to Gentiles in 17:32ff. The Septuagint text (9:9) has παρα with the accusative. Gray, II, 642, has "before."

There is also a significant number of references to the God of the Fathers in Jubilees (27:22; 31:25; 31:31; 35:14; 44:5; 45:3), the Prayer of Manasseh (vs. 1), and the Additions to Esther 4:17f, y.[2] This latter document was probably a product of a writer in a Semitic language, soon translated into Greek, after composition in the second or first century B. C.[3] These references show largely the liturgical use to which the patriarchal tradition was put in addressing the deity.[4]

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[1] Eissfeldt, pp. 623-24. Pfeiffer, History, p. 79. Russell, p. 58. Charles, "The Assumption of Moses," A&P, II, 407, 411.

[2] References = C8 = RSV 13:15 and = C30 = RSV 14:18.

[3] Eissfeldt, p. 592. Pfeiffer, History, pp. 310-311. Metzger, p. 55. Contra J. A. F. Gregg, "Additions to Esther," A&P, I, 666, who takes the position that the original language was Greek.

[4] Another reference of minor significance comes from the Dream Vision of I (Ethiopic) Enoch. This is dated generally in the mid-second century B. C. Eissfeldt, p. 619. Pfeiffer, History, p. 77. Charles, "I Enoch," A&P, II, 164. In this vision Abraham appears under the symbol of a white bull who begat a wild ass and a white bull. In its symbolic representation of Israel's history the text of I Enoch follows Genesis and Exodus rather faithfully.

Abraham and the Spartans. In I Maccabees there is a unique reference to the Abraham tradition which relates the Jews and Spartans in kinship on the basis of descent from Abraham. I Maccabees 12 refers to a letter sent by Jonathan ben Mattathias to the Spartans to renew an alliance on the basis of an earlier letter sent to the high priest, Onias I, by Arius, king of Sparta, stating that "you are our brethren" (12:7). The letter from Arius to Onias is said to have stated specifically: "It has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brethren and are of the family of Abraham" (12:21). Both M. S. Ginsburg and S. Schüller give some support to the authenticity of this friendship even if the letter in I Maccabees is not itself authentic. Schüller identifies Arius with Areus I (309-265 B. C.) and Onias as Onias I.[1] He points to the historical probability of this Spartan-initiated friendship in the period of Spartan struggle against Antigonids and Seleucids in a period when the Jewish state was in the Ptolemaic orbit.[2] He points out the statement of Diodorus Siculus (xl. 3, 2) concerning the banishment of men from Egypt in an early period with some going to Greece and some to Judea.[3] If this tradition has any historical validity, it shows a surprising use of the Abraham tradition with its promise concerning the father of many nations.

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[1] S. Schüller, "Some Problems Connected with the Supposed Common Ancestry of Jews and Spartans and their Relations during the Last Three Centuries B. C.," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, I (1956), 257. The Septuagint has Darius; Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, 226, *q. v. infra*, correct reading.

[2] Schüller, 259

[3] *Ibid.*, 264. Cf. M. S. Ginsburg, "Sparta and Judea," *Classical Philology*, XXIX (1934), 121.

Thus it appears that in the historical period beginning with the Maccabean struggle and ending with the conclusion of the Jewish War the Abraham tradition received new dimensions of emphasis, while still retaining continuity with the older emphases. In literature read both in Palestine and in the Hellenistic Diaspora there is a considerable interest in Abraham as a person who was more than the recipient of the covenant promises. He is presented as the perfect example of the Torah-keeping Jew, with considerable emphasis on his faithfulness when tested. It is true, of course, that in some of this literature Abraham is only one of a whole series of ancient heroes of the faith presented as models to the readers. Nevertheless as the first of the Israelite patriarchs he is the subject of more than average interest. Many of the statements made about Abraham during this period are developments of motifs present at least implicitly in earlier traditions. It seems most probable that the historical and theological crises of this period account for the existential refraction of the Abraham tradition and the direction which this took. In a time when faithfulness to the Torah, loyalty to the one God of Israel, and a newly deepened historical self-consciousness were pressing realties of decision and life, it was inevitable that those who "searched the scriptures" would find in the father of the people a model for the contemporary situation.

Literature of the late first century A. D. (after 70 A. D.). From the period after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus come five Jewish pseudepigrapha, three of which appear to derive from the same school of writers. The Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo, II Esdras (IV Ezra), II (Syriac) Baruch, and the Apocalypse of Abraham seem definitely to be post-war documents; and it is perhaps best to date the extant text of the Testament of Abraham in this same period. All are believed by many scholars to derive from Semitic Palestinian originals, although they now exist only in translation.

The Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo is a rewriting of Biblical history from Adam to Saul's death with considerable modification of earlier accounts. It is extant only in a Latin translation from Greek from original Hebrew.[1] Eissfeldt believes that both II Esdras and II Baruch are dependent upon it or its source, and M. R. James likewise suggests that they are all products of the same school.[2]

In Pseudo-Philo's treatment of Abraham there is a repetition of some of the motifs noted earlier, particularly that of Abraham as model and example. Abraham's birth is prophesied in 4:11: "perfectus vocabitur et immaculatus, et pater gentium erit, et non dissolvetur testamentum eius, et semen eius in seculum multiplicabitur." Contrary to a widespread tradition which represents Abraham's parents as idolaters, Pseudo-Philo even presents his great-grandfather, Seruch, as a devotee of the true faith (4:16). The story of Babel and Abraham's departure from Ur are joined together by Pseudo-Philo with a play on the Hebrew word, אור, which means "fire." Abraham is one of a group of twelve who refuse to work on the Tower of Babel (the other eleven escaping to the mountains). Abraham is thrown into a fiery furnace (as is the case in the earlier story of the three young men in Daniel), but is miraculously rescued, although the heat destroys 83,500 men (6:17). After this, Pseudo-Philo records rather briefly the confusion of tongues, the migration of Abraham (with Sarah and Lot) to Canaan, and the birth of Ishmael and Isaac. As in Exodus and in earlier rewriting of the tradition, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt is related to the remembrance of the covenant with the fathers. As in Jubilees, however, this covenant appears to be a consequence of Abraham's obedience. In the Balaam story (ch. 18) when Balaam prays to God for enlightenment as to whether to go to Balak, God's reply refers to the promise to Abraham concerning his seed and to his offering of Isaac, "pro sanguine eius elegi istos" (18:5). In Joshua's speech (ch. 23) a resumé is given of the Abraham tradition: his belief in God, deliverance from the fire, exodus to Canaan, and receiving of the promise. The animals of the Gen. 15 vision are symbols representing Abraham and types of his progeny: prophets, wise men, multitudes, and women with fruitful wombs. Abraham himself is represented by the dove because he received from God the city (Jerusalem?) which his sons would begin to build (23:7).

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[1] Guido Kisch, Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum ("Publications in Mediaeval Studies," No. 10; Notre Dame, Ind.: The University of Notre Dame, 1949), p. 17.

[2] Eissfeldt, p. 629. M. R. James, The Biblical Antiquities of Philo (London and New York: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), pp. 7, 58. James's translation is from a poorer manuscript tradition than that of Kisch's Latin edition.

In Pseudo-Philo's account of the story of Deborah (ch. 32) there are references to the birth of Isaac and to the jealousy of even the angels against Isaac. God's response is to require the sacrifice of Isaac. The interest is focused primarily on Isaac's response. He gladly accepts the role of sacrifice describing it as much more efficacious for man's iniquities than the sacrifice of lambs. He says:

> Erit autem mea beatitudo super omnes homines quia non erit aliud, et in me annunciabunt generationes et per me intelligent populi quoniam dignificavit Dominus animam hominis in sacrificium (32:3).

God speaks then from on high to stop the sacrifice and tells Abraham that his memorial will be before him forever and his son's name from one generation to another (32:4). Alongside this, however, Deborah says later (33:5):

> Propterea nolite sperare in patribus vestris. Non enim vobis proderunt, nisi similes inveniamini eis.

There is also a reference to the sacrifice of Isaac in the statement of Seila, Jephthah's daughter, who (40:2) asks how one can be sorrowful in death when it means deliverance to one's people. Recalling the sacrifice of Isaac she says: ". . . et erat qui offerebatur paratus, et qui offerebat gaudens." Pseudo-Philo points out, however, in 39:11 that the sacrifice of Seila is different from the sacrifice of Isaac because of Jephthah's attitude; and Jephthah's sacrifice is not the reason for the deliverance of Israel.[1]

Pseudo-Philo while guarding against any notion of automatic merit puts a great amount of emphasis upon the results of Isaac's willing sacrifice. Vermes, who acknowledges that the text concerning the sacrifice of Isaac is not easy, indicates that three important points seem to emerge from it: (a) Isaac's free and willing offering of his life; (b) the relating of his sacrifice to other sacrifices offered to God and accepted by him for the sins of men; (c) Isaac's awareness of the beneficent effect of his self-giving upon future generations.[2] Vermes attributes the origin of this haggadah to the midrashic process of interpreting one scripture in light of another, and concludes that it is impossible not to recall the figure of the suffering servant of Deutero-Isaiah when reading this part of Pseudo-Philo. Isaac freely offers himself and his sacrifice is acceptable to God in favor of his descendents and even those outside Israel. Isaac is offered as a holocaustal lamb in a sacrifice ordained by God. The parallels with Deutero-Isaiah are unmistakable. Vermes suggests that it is almost certain that this association was due to the author's reflections on the significance of martyrdom. If the blood of martyrs is viewed by God as an expiatory sacrifice, then _a fortiori_ the self-sacrifice of Isaac atoned for the sins of his descendents. According to this theory, the creation of the haggadah itself belongs to the period of the Maccabean persecution and is pre-Christian.[1]

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[1] A final reference to Abraham in Pseudo-Philo has the seven stones which David uses against Goliath with the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, and the Most Mighty (61:5).

[2] Vermes, _Scripture and Tradition_, p. 200.

In II Esdras (IV Ezra), clearly belonging to the period after 70 A. D. and probably written originally in a Semitic tongue, although extant only in translation, the interest in Abraham is slight, but significant.[2] The writer's interest centers in the story of Genesis 15. Here, according to II Esdras, Abraham, whom God loved, received a vision of the end of the times secretly at night, and to him alone was this revelation made. On this night was given also the everlasting covenant and God's promise never to forsake Abraham's descendants (3:14-15). Later in the book the question of Abraham's powers as intercessor is discussed. II Esdras in ch. 7 insists that on the day of judgment there can be no intercession for the wicked. When Ezra gives examples of Abraham's intercession for Sodom, and calls to mind also the intercessory role of Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, and Hezekiah, the answer is that such intercession belongs only to the present age and not to the day of judgment (7:113ff.=7:43ff.).[3] Thus in this document the covenant is an eternal one, but each man is finally judged on the basis of his own righteousness or unrighteousness (see 9:36). This treatment of Abraham seems certainly to reflect a tension within Judaism concerning the merits of the fathers.[1]

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[1] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 202.

[2] II Esdras exists only in Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Sahidic, and Georgian, Eissfeldt, pp. 626-27. Also Pfeiffer, History, pp. 81, 84; Russell, pp. 62-63; G. H. Box, "4 Ezra," A&P, II, 542. Chapters 1-2 and 15-16 are generally acknowledged as Christian interpolations.

[3] Verses 36-105 are missing in many manuscripts.

II Baruch, which is preserved only in a few Greek fragments and in Syriac manuscripts, apparently from a Hebrew or Aramaic original, is generally acknowledged to be dependent upon II Esdras.[2] This apocalypse is interested also in Genesis 15 and indicates that the heavenly Jerusalem to be revealed was shown to Abraham by night among the portions of the victims (4:4). In a description of the desolation in the world since the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, (21:24ff.) there is the plea for God to show his glory and fulfill his promises. Perhaps the most significant reference to Abraham is in the section, chapters 53-69, where the author divides the world's history prior to the Messiah's coming into thirteen periods. The first bright period of history is the period from Abraham to Jacob. This is described (57:1-2) as a time when the unwritten Torah was named among them, the work of the commandments fulfilled, the belief in the coming judgment generated, the hope of the world to come built up, and the promise of the life to come hereafter implanted. This retrojection of the orthodox beliefs of the author's times into patriarchal times is reminiscent of Jubilees and consistent with the earlier identification of Wisdom and Israel's Torah.

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[1] Another reference is in 6:8 in a question of the seer concerning the dividing of the times between this age and the age to come. He is told that the succession will be immediate (apparently) - "from Abraham to Abraham" (thus Sangermanensis and Ambianensis, Syriac and Ethiopic, some Arabic) or "from Abraham to Isaac (thus Complutensis and Mazarinaeus, and some Arabic). Box, p. 575, prints the former in his text.

[2] Eissfeldt, pp. 629-30. Pfeiffer, History, pp. 86-87, 89. Russell, p. 64-65. Charles, "2 Baruch," A&P, II, 482,510, regards 4:2-7 as a Christian interpolation and 53-74 as written 50-70 A. D. Most scholars reject such attempts at dissection of this document.

The Testament of Abraham, which may come from a Semitic original, is found only in Greek and translations from Greek.[1] While precise dating is impossible, it is perhaps best dated in the late first century A. D., as a Hellenistic Jewish expansion of a Palestinian document of the early first century A. D. with later Christian interpolations.[2] The Greek text itself exists in two recensions. The readings in the shorter recension are said to approximate the original readings more closely, although the longer recension preserves the greater portion of the original story.[3] Abraham is described here as gentle, just, peaceable, and exceedingly hospitable (ch. 1).[4] Michael is designated by God to tell Abraham of his approaching death. He is received by Abraham as a royal visitor, but Michael cannot bring himself to tell Abraham of his death (ch. 4). When he is finally told (after a dream by Isaac), Abraham is reluctant to die, but requests to see all the world and all created things as a last favor before death (ch. 9). When Abraham, however, on his tour sees sinfulness, he purposes to destroy the evil people. God stops the tour since it is God's policy to have mercy, and unless prevented, Abraham would destroy every living thing. "For behold, Abraham has not sinned, neither pities he sinners; but I made the world, and will not to destroy any creature from among them, but I delay the death of the sinner until he repent and live" (ch. 10). Abraham is then carried to observe the judgment (ch. 10), and in one case where a man's sins and righteousness are exactly equal, the intercession of Abraham and Michael cause the man to be ushered into paradise (ch. 14).[1] Abraham then sees his own sin in cursing and destroying sinners and prays for forgiveness (ch. 14). When Michael is still unable to bring Abraham to his death, God sends Death to end his life (chs. 15-16). When Death reveals his terror, seven thousand of Abraham's servants die, but through the intercession of Abraham *and Death* they are restored (chs. 17-18). Abraham finally dies and his soul is escorted to heaven by angels (ch. 20). Here is obviously a different point of view concerning the relation of intercession and merit from that represented by II Esdras and expressive perhaps of a living issue within first-century Judaism.[2]

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[1] Russell, p. 81.

[2] Box, The Testament of Abraham ("Translations of Early Documents," Series II; London: Society for Promoting Christian, 1927), pp. xxviii-xxix. Russell, pp. 60-61. M. R. James, however, (cited in Russell, p. 60, and Box, pp. vii-viii) regards it as a Jewish-Christian work of the second century A. D.

[3] Box, The Testament of Abraham, pp. xiii-xiv. This is especially true in the matter of Abraham as intercessor. The longer recension is followed in this study.

[4] The Box edition is divided only into chapters.

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[1] It is here that the shorter recension differs from the longer most significantly. Box, *The Testament of Abraham*, pp. xiii-xiv.

[2] Box appends a translation from the Coptic versions of a Testament of Isaac and a Testament of Jacob by S. Gaselee, but there is no evidence that these documents fall within the period under examination. The standard works on pseudepigrapha and apocalyptic, even when including the Testament of Abraham, make no mention of these other two documents.

Clearly from the period after the destruction comes the Apocalypse of Abraham, a work originally in Hebrew with Christian redactions, but extant only in Slavonic.[1] The work has two major parts. The first part is a midrashic treatment of Abraham's conversion from idolatry. He had followed Terah's occupation as an idol maker (1:1), but comes to reason the ridiculousness of the worship of idols, much to Terah's anger (ch. 4). He reasons from nature to a belief in God the creator, and at last God reveals himself to him (chs. 7-8). Abraham is told to leave his father and his father's house, and so he escapes when both his father and house are burned (ch. 8). The second part of the work is the apocalypse proper, a vision apparently related to Gen. 15. Abraham is led by the angel Jaoel to Mt. Horeb for this revelation (ch. 12). There Azazel is unable to accomplish his purpose of preventing Abraham from sacrificing animals to God (chs. 13-14). Abraham receives a vision of the throne of God (ch. 18), and he is given the promise of seed "in my heritage with Azazel," i. e., in a world under demonic power (ch. 20). From this heavenly vantage point he has a vision of the future of the world, with the destruction of the wicked and the ingathering of Israel, with ten plagues preceding the end (chs. 27-31).

Thus in the literature of the post-war period of the first century A. D. earlier emphases such as the blamelessness or perfection of Abraham are continued. There is continuing interest in Abraham as monotheist, and in this literature his faithfulness to one God is joined to the motif of testing in the fiery furnace episode patterned on the story in Daniel. There is a clear development in the idea of the efficacy of the sacrifice of Isaac, although, as has been pointed out, the haggadah itself may be earlier. It also is significant that the literature of this period shows concern with the role of Abraham as intercessor, although varying answers to this concern are given. Finally in this period the episode in Genesis 15 provided a continuing occasion for speculation.

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[1] Box, The Apocalypse of Abraham ("Translation of Early Documents," Series I; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), pp. x, xv. Russell, p. 60.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. The Qumran discoveries have raised afresh the problem of the provenance of these documents and have made problematic the use of these testaments in the reconstruction of the development of any particular tradition. Only fragments of an Aramaic Testament of Levi and a Hebrew Testament of Naphtali have been found at Qumran. Scholars continue to debate whether the completed edition of the twelve testaments was of Jewish or Christian origin, and opinions on dating run from late second century B. C. to second century A. D.[1]

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[1] Russell, pp. 56-57, summarizes the present state of scholarly opinion on this matter: Charles views the Testaments as essentially Jewish with Christian interpolation and dates them 109-107 B. C. Dupont-Sommer sees very little Christian influence and brings them into close relationship with Qumran documents. M. Philonenko contends that the Testaments originated with the Testament of Levi, to which were added the Testament of Judah and Testament of Naphtali, which were then redacted (and shortened) by an Essene and then the remaining Testaments were added with later Essene and Christian redaction. This is also the position of A. S. van der Woude. M. de Jonge, on the other hand, sees the

The fragments of the Aramaic Testament of Levi from Qumran are identical with the Aramaic fragments of a Testament of Levi from the Cairo Geniza, though different from the Testament of Levi contained in the complete Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[1] The Hebrew Testament of Naphtali from Qumran, however, differs from a Hebrew Testament of Naphtali preserved in a twelfth-century Paris manuscript, published in translation by Charles and designated by him as a late Hebrew testament.[2] Thus, in the present state of research upon the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, we can only say with certainty that within the period under consideration one or more Jewish communities knew a Testament of Levi and a Testament of Naphtali. The unresolved questions do not, however, greatly affect this study. There are really no new aspects of the Abraham tradition introduced either in the testaments which can with some certainty be dated in the period under consideration or in those of the

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Testaments as largely Christian, though acknowledging at least one Jewish stage. Milik's view is that the present Testaments are the work of a Jewish Christian of the first or second century, adopting such Testaments as were already in existence and completing the set.

To this should be added the opinion of Eissfeldt, p. 635, who sides with the probability of Qumran provenance.

[1] Milik, Ten Years, p. 34. The readings in the Aramaic fragments from the Cairo Geniza are almost identical with the readings in a tenth-century Greek manuscript of a Testament of Levi from Mt. Athos at those points where they can be compared. Charles, The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1908), p. liii.

[2] Milik, "Prière de Nabonide," Revue Biblique, LXIII (1956), 407, note 1. Charles, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," A&P, II, 361-63. Charles, The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, p. li.

completed set of testaments which may be considerably later.

In the Hebrew Testament of Naphtali published by Charles there is reference to the Babel story when Abraham chose God and remained with the Creator to worship him, with the retention of Hebrew only in that family (8:3, 6; 9:5; 10:2b). In the fragmentary Testament of Levi, published by Charles, Levi receives the same instructions from Isaac which he had received from Abraham concerning the kinds of wood acceptable for sacrifice along with other cultic laws (vss. 22, 50, 57).[1] These motifs, of course, have been encountered elsewhere.

In the complete Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (differing considerably from the fragments of the Testaments of Levi and Naphtali), there are a number of Abraham references. In the Testament of Levi the Shechemites, who are slain after the rape of Dinah and their circumcision, are said to have persecuted Abraham when he was a stranger (6:9). The instructions given to Levi concerning his responsibilities are said to go back ultimately to Abraham (9:6-14). Levi also says that if it were not for the mercy through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, none of their descendents should be left upon the earth (15:4). In a messianic hymn in the Testament of Levi (18:2-15) it is said that the Father's voice will come upon the new priesthood as from Abraham to Isaac and in the renewal of heaven and earth Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all of the saints shall rejoice.

The Testament of Judah (25:1) speaks of the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob after the Messiah comes. The Testament of Naphtali describes Abraham as a Chaldean, God-fearing, free-born, and noble (1:10). The Testament of Asher (2:7) speaks of the gathering of the scattered through God's tender mercy and for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the Testament of Joseph (6:7), when he was enticed by the Egyptian woman, prayed that the God of the Fathers and the angel of Abraham might be with him. Earlier (1:4) he spoke of being guarded by the God of the Fathers when his brothers sought to slay him. Finally in the Testament of Benjamin that patriarch says that instead of an inheritance he leaves his children a testament as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--the legacy to keep God's commandments until the Lord should reveal his salvation to all Gentiles (10:3-4). Then (10:6) will be seen Enoch, Noah, and Shem, and Abraham with Isaac and Jacob rising on the right hand in gladness.

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[1] Vss. 32b-66 are found only in the Greek Mt. Athos manuscript, although the rest is found both in Aramaic and Greek.

In the general apocrypha and pseudepigrapha under consideration in this section of our investigation some of the earlier emphases continued to receive attention. More important, however, are the new directions which the interpretation of the Abraham materials took. While receiving slight emphasis in the pre-Maccabean literature, these themes come into full prominence in the time of the Maccabean crisis. They continue to be developed up to the end of the period of this study.

Considerable attention is given in this literature to

Abraham's faithfulness when tested. This is done both in simple statement and in the haggadah of the Ten Trials. In one case this includes the rescue of Abraham from the fiery furnace. Abraham's faithfulness when tested is sometimes understood as the reason for God's establishment of the covenant with him.

It required only slight extension of this way of thinking to describe Abraham not only as faithful whenever tested, but as perfectly obedient in every aspect and circumstance of life. He is the model of Jewish piety and religion. He keeps all of the Torah regulations perfectly long before they are explicitly delivered to Israel by Moses. Consistent with this point of view some writers omit or modify the Genesis episodes which would detract from the character of Abraham (in a way analogous to the Chronicler's handling of the David stories). This focus on the obedience of Abraham leads in some cases to an embryonic doctrine of the merits of the fathers. The fact that such a doctrine is explicitly denied in other documents seems to indicate, however, that in this period this was a living issue of theological debate.

There is a notable cultic interest in several documents in this group. This ranges from the liturgical address, "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," in prayers to descriptions of Abraham's obedience in cultic matters and meditation on the meaning of Gen. 22. Very significant is the dating of the binding of Isaac on Passover by the author of Jubilees and the extensive treatment of the value of the binding of Isaac by Pseudo-Philo.

The Abraham tradition also finds a place in apocalyptic speculation. Generally the foundation for this is the narrative in Gen. 15. It would indeed have been unusual if among the ancient worthies to whom apocalyptic visions are attributed Abraham had been absent. Finally the tradition found in I Maccabees concerning kinship between the Jews and the Spartans shows a somewhat remarkable interpretation of the "father of many nations" motif during the Hellenistic age.

Literature of the Qumran Community

In addition to the manuscripts and fragments of the Hebrew Scriptures (with the exception of Esther) and also fragments of some Greek manuscripts of these books, the caves at Qumran have yielded fragments or manuscripts of ben Sira (Hebrew), Tobit (Hebrew and Aramaic), the Letter of Jeremiah (Greek), Jubilees (portions of nine Hebrew manuscripts), Enoch (Aramaic), and documents related to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Aramaic Levi and Hebrew Naphtali).[1] In addition, there are a number of _peshers_, liturgical fragments, and other documents relating to the life, piety, and worship of the sectarian community, including extensive fragments from three of the caves of the already known Damascus Document.[1]

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[1] Dupont-Sommer, _The Essene Writings_, pp. 3, 296-305. Eissfeldt, pp. 707-708.

Of all the Qumran scrolls published thus far only one document not known elsewhere before the Dead Sea discoveries mentions Abraham. This document, the Genesis Apocryphon (IQ Gen. Apoc.), is of considerable interest in terms of understanding the continuity of development of haggadic tradition. Another quite recently published document, the Melchizedek Scroll (11Q Melch), is also important for this study in its understanding of perhaps the most enigmatic figure in the Biblical Abraham stories. A study of the understanding of Abraham in the piety of the Qumran sectarians in the century preceding and following the turn of the era must, however, extend beyond these documents. Documents already known and discussed in this study, but also found at Qumran--including the final priestly edition of Torah, post-exilic prophecy, Tobit, Enoch, ben Sira, Jubilees, and the Damascus Document--must be taken into consideration. Also, since the understanding of Abraham is inextricably bound to the understanding of the covenant of God with Israel, the particular understanding of this relationship must be treated. For an analysis of the covenant piety of Qumran particular reference will be made to the Damascus Document (CD), the Manual of Discipline (IQS), the

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[1] G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 95. These Qumran fragments correspond to the Ms. A from the Cairo Geniza. Since the only complete copies of the Damascus Document are from the Cairo Geniza and not from Qumran, most editions of the Dead Sea Scrolls publish these medieval copies and assume the correspondence of the complete Qumran copies when they existed. On this document, see pp. 82ff. of this study.

War Rule (1QM), the Hymn Scroll (1QH), the Blessings (1QSb), and the Words of Lights (4Q Dib Ham).[1]

The Genesis Apocryphon (*IQ Gen. Apoc.*). The Genesis Apocryphon is generally dated in the period from the first century B. C. to the first century A. D. within the same period as Enoch and Jubilees.[2] A number of scholars regard it as preceding Jubilees, which seems in many places to be an abridgement of this scroll.[3] It is prior to the Targums, and its paraphrases resemble most the midrashic insertions of the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.[4] The first part of the published scroll is concerned with the life of Noah, but after a lacuna columns

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[1] A number of problems related to Qumran studies remain unsolved and will not be entered into in this discussion. They include such matters as the relative dating of documents within the period of the sect's existence; dependence of documents upon one another; historical allusions in the scrolls; precise identification of the sectarians. In this study the translation of G. Vermes is generally followed, with citation of the original text also indicated. A comparison of the standard collections in English has been made in this study and reference made back to the original in cases of significant differences in translations. No attempt has been made to make original translations or to read through the original when translators are in general agreement.

[2] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I* ("Biblica et Orientalia," No. 18; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 14, 16. N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon*, trans. S. S. Nardi (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University and Heikhal Ha-Sefer, 1956), p. 38. Dupont-Sommer, p. 281. J. Carmignac, E. Cothenet, and H. Ligneé, *Les Textes de Qumran*, (2 vols.; Paris: Éditions Letouzey et Ane, 1963), II, 217. E. Y. Kutscher, "The Language of the Genesis Apocryphon: A Preliminary Study," *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin ("*Scripta Hierosolymitana*," Vol. IV ; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1958) p. 22.

[3] Avigad and Yadin, p. 38. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, p. 124. Paul Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. 199.

[4] Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, p. 32.

XIX-XXII are concerned with Abraham, specifically with retelling chapters 12-15 of the Biblical Genesis.[1]

G. Vermes, who classifies the Genesis Apocryphon as a primitive, unbiased (i. e., vis-à-vis works such as Jubilees) haggadah, has pointed out that haggadah in its earliest form is not an extraneous creation of the Jewish mind, but that it developed in continuity with the Bible itself. He suggests that at one point there was no divergence at all between the Biblical and interpretative tradition.[2] Thus with the work of the Priestly writer and the Chronicler we actually have midrash, which then becomes a part of the total tradition. This then later is reinterpreted in works such as the Genesis Apocryphon, and so on again and again in a living, continuing stream of tradition without a major break. Vermes finds in the Genesis Apocryphon the lost link between the Biblical materials and the rabbinic materials.[3] In retelling the story of Abraham, the writer of the Genesis Apocryphon tries, as did the Chronicler, to make the Biblical story more attractive, edifying and intelligible. In a concern organically related to the Biblical text he tries to explain what is unexplained there and to present

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[1] This study follows the translation of Fitzmyer, which, while basically that of Avigad and Yadin, the original publishers, has been emended according to many suggestions by writers and reviewers and restored in some places in a fuller form than in the original edition. See Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, p.25.

[2] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 126-27.

[3] Ibid., p. 124.

Abraham in the best possible light.[1] In this he, of course, shares a concern with a number of documents already discussed.

Column XIX begins with Abraham's journey from Canaan to Egypt during the famine and centers first upon an explanation of his deception of Pharaoh concerning Sarah's identity. Unlike Jubilees, which omits the deception, the Genesis Apocryphon describes a dream which came to Abraham--thus placing the responsibility for the deception upon God and thereby exonerating Abraham. Abraham interprets the dream of two trees, one spared at the intercession of the other, to mean that Sarah must protect him by lying about their relationship. After arriving in Egypt Abraham and Sarah are visited by three nobles, one of whom is later identified as Hirqanos. According to Fitzmyer's reconstruction of the text (XIX:25), Abraham reads to these nobles from the words of Enoch.[2] Column XX begins with an elaborate description of Sarah's beauty and wisdom by the Egyptian nobles to Pharaoh, a passage more extensive than any rabbinical passage on Sarah's beauty,[3] and constructed in the form of a typical *waṣf* reminiscent of the Song of Songs.[4] Pharaoh has her brought to him, and because of her deception and intercession Abraham is not killed. At this point the writer introduces material concerning the weeping and prayer of

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[1] Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, pp. 125-126.

[2] Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, pp. 52-53.

[3] Fitzmyer, *ibid.*, p. 107. See also Avigad and Yadin, p. 26.

[4] Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, trans. Emile T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 12.

Abraham, in response to which God sends an evil spirit upon Pharaoh and his household.[1] Although Sarah is in the royal house for two years, Pharaoh is unable to approach her. The Egyptians are unable to relieve the intensified suffering of the royal family. Hirqanos, having seen Abraham in a dream, comes to ask that he lay his hands upon Pharaoh and pray over him that he may be cured. Lot, however, tells the noble that this will be impossible so long as Pharaoh has Abraham's wife. The king rebukes Abraham for his deception, Abraham prays and exorcises Pharaoh and leaves Egypt with gifts from the king including Hagar.[2] Some of these details seem to be drawn from the Abimelech episode,[3] but there is an embellishment of detail concerning Lot's participation and the use of the laying on of hands in exorcism. As Vermes points out, the Genesis Apocryphon also makes a significant modification in the Biblical account so that vis-à-vis Genesis 12:16 here (XXI:6-7) Abraham is indebted to Sarah for his life, but not for his prosperity (i. e., the gifts from Pharaoh come after the release of Sarah).[4]

Upon the return to Canaan Lot unilaterally decides to leave Abraham. He receives gifts from Abraham and settles in Sodom. Curiously there is no mention of the sinfulness of the

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[1] Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, p. 114.

[2] Carmignac, Cothenet, and Lignée, II, 214, point out that the Prayer of Nabonidus has Daniel in an analogous situation. Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings, p. 288, note 2, points also to the statement of Josephus that the Essenes were particularly expert in the art of healing.

[3] Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, p. 119. Avigad and Yadin, p. 26.

[4] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 114. Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, p. 129.

Sodomites. Abraham is grieved at Lot's departure, but he is promised land and posterity by God and moves throughout the promised land, symbolically taking possession of it. This overcomes the embarrassing fact that in the Bible there is no explicit evidence of Abraham's obedience to the command of Genesis 12:17.[1] This is followed by the battle of the kings (where the text shifts from first to third person), with Abraham's grief and weeping upon hearing of Lot's capture. This section follows the Biblical text rather closely. In this account, however, only the king of Gomorrah falls into the bitumen pits. Thus the difficulty of the later meeting of the king of Sodom (who here, unlike the Biblical account, does not fall into the pits) is eliminated.[2] The meeting with Melchizedek (Jerusalem and Salem being identified in XXII:13) also follows the Biblical text closely and is significant by its presence in this scroll in light of the fact of its omission or removal (anti-Hasmonean?) from the text of Jubilees. While the Hebrew text of Genesis is ambiguous about who gave tithes (whether Abraham or Melchizedek), it is significant that the Genesis Apocryphon follows what became the general rabbinic and Christian tradition that Abraham was the giver. The tithe in this scroll, however, is simply from the booty of the defeated kings and is not from "everything" as in Genesis 14:20.[3] The scroll breaks off with the divine assurance to Abraham that Eliezer will not be his heir, but rather his own son.

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[1] Avigad and Yadin, p. 29.

[2] Ibid., p. 36. See also Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, p. 149.

[3] Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, pp.158-59.

This treatment of Abraham in the Genesis Apocryphon is of particular interest in light of the scant treatment of him in other Qumran scrolls. Here he is the recipient of the divine promises of land and posterity. Here his biography is modified much as were those of David and Solomon at the hands of the Chronicler. In everything Abraham is the perfect man of piety and example for his posterity (just as Sarah is the ideal Jewess in her wisdom and beauty). He is always obedient to the voice of God, even in the deception of Pharaoh. He is a man whose prayers are efficacious, who grieves over wrongdoing and the severing of human ties. He is the ready ally of oppressed peoples and their help in war (in the battle of the kings), and he is beneficent in victory. He is linked to the past by his reference to the Enoch tradition and he is linked to the future in his posterity which is promised.

The Melchizedek Scroll (_11Q Melch_). Another figure must now be taken into account in the complicated eschatological teaching of the Qumran community in light of the editing of the Melchizedek Scroll from Qumran Cave 11. This text, dated perhaps in the first part of the first century A. D., is described as "another fragmentary example of a composition on isolated Old Testament texts taken from their original context and strung together with some theological intention."[1] The original publication by A. S. van der Woude[1] is followed in the more recent study by Joseph Fitzmyer with notations of points of difference in interpretation.[2] The major interest in this scroll is the unique position attributed to Melchizedek and his heavenly status according to the sectarians.[3] The text, which is in quite fragmentary form, begins with a reference to the Jubilee Year (part of Leviticus 25) and introduces Melchizedek, who is given a special role in the execution of divine judgment which is especially related to a Jubilee Year.[4] His role involves the making of atonement in that year (לכפר בו, line 8) "for all the sons of light and men of the lot of Melchizedek" (if we follow the Fitzmyer's reconstruction of the text).[5] In his functions Melchizedek takes his place above the Elohim.[6] This scroll not only indicates continuing reflection on the Biblical Abraham pericopes (even though Abraham himself does not figure in this scroll), but also provides new matters for consideration in the interpretation of the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews.

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[1] Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11," _Journal of Biblical Literature,_ LXXXVI (1967), 25.

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[1] A. S. van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Hohle XI," Oudtestamentische Studien, XIV (1965), 354-73.

[2] Fitzmyer, "Further Light," 25. Translation is on pp. 28-29.

[3] Y. Yadin, "A Note on Melchizedek and Qumran," Israel Exploration Journal, XV (1965), 153.

[4] Fitzmyer, "Further Light," 29.

[5] Ibid., 36. Fitzmyer notes that van der Woude regards the text as uncertain. The statement, "That is the Day of Atonement," in line 7 is also uncertain and is left untranslated by van der Woude, but regarded by Fitzmyer, ibid., 35, as possible and plausible.

[6] Lines 10-11. Although identified with Michael by van der Woude, Fitzmyer regards the question as impossible of solution at this point. Ibid., 32.

The Qumran sectarians and the Abrahamic covenant. The treatment of the Qumran understanding of Abraham cannot be limited to specific Abrahamic references in literature peculiar to the sect, but must take into account all of the literature in their use and must also be set within the larger and more problematic context of their theology of the covenant of God with Israel. The sectarians knew and used the Torah in its final Priestly redaction with the emphases already described. They knew the post-exilic prophecies with emphasis upon the Abraham stories as the foundation of a covenant relationship which was eternal and continued even when Israel in her guilt had broken the covenant requirements. They knew the tradition developed in the apocryphal and psendepigraphical literature concerning the blameless Abraham, the example to his posterity both in faithfulness during testing and in all aspects of life. They knew the tradition of Abraham's perfect keeping of the pre-existent Torah later promulgated by Moses.

It is quite clear that even though the Qumran folk use the language of the "new covenant (ברית החדשה),[1] there is in their thought a single covenant with Israel. The new covenant with Israel is for them simply the eschatological renewal

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[1] CD VIII:21. Hebrew text in Chaim Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (second revised edition; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 36-37. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 106.

(as seen explicitly in the phrase, "you have renewed the covenant," ותחדש בריתך)[1] of the single eternal covenant (ברית עולם)[2] which God has never abandoned,[3] even though many Israelites have done so.[4] The literature speaks of the covenant with the fathers (ברית האבות).[5] This is clearly the covenant established with Abraham.[6] Yet the community can describe the eternal covenant as the covenant which Moses made with Israel.[7] The sectarians seem to have understood the history of covenant in a very static way up until its eschatological renewal in their own community. Thus Abraham is understood largely in Mosaic terms. It is the Mosaic material in the Bible which determines the form of the treatment of Abraham, even though, as will be pointed out, the sectarian's relationship to

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[1] IQ34 bis, "Recueil de prières liturgiques," D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I* ("Discoveries in the Judean Desert," I; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 154. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 206.

[2] I Q Sb, I:2-3, "Benediction des fideles," Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave I*, p. 120. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 206.

[3] 4 Q Dib Ham V, Maurice Baillet, "Un recueil liturgique de Qumrân, Grotte 4: 'Les paroles des luminaires,'" *Revue Biblique*, LXVIII (1961), 206-209, Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 204.

[4] See Annie Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance dans le Judaisme aux abords de l'ere chretienne* ("Patristica Sorbonensia," tome 6; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), p. 248.

[5] CD VIII:17. Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents*, pp. 34-35. See Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 106. Also War Rule XIII:7, E. L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1955), plate 28, Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 141.

[6] CD III:2-4, Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents*, pp. 10-11. See Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 99. Also CD XII:11, Rabin, pp. 60-61; Vermes, p. 114.

[7] CD XV:8-10, Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents*, pp. 72-73; Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 108.

God is ultimately understood as a gift of God's grace. As in the case of the Priestly writers and the Chronicler, the Qumran sectarians include in their understanding a series of additional covenants made with more specialized groups within Israel. Mention is made of the covenant with David,[1] the covenant of kingship (ברית מלכות),[2] and the covenant of the priesthood (ברית כהונת).[3]

The Qumran covenant theology is complicated by the fact that alongside a strong doctrine of predestination and justification through God's grace alone, there is an equally strong limitation of the covenant to those who obey the covenant requirements as interpreted by the sect's authoritative teachers and consciously and deliberately separate themselves from the rest of Israel.

The clearest statements of a theology of pure grace in the face of man's unworthiness are found in the Hodayoth (1QH), "le joyan de la littérature qumrânienne."[4] The following is typical:

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[1] 4 Q Dib Ham IV:6, Baillet, 204-205. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 2-3.

[2] 4 Q Patriarchal Blessings, Document I, line 4, J. M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXV (1956), 175. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 224.

[3] 1 QSb=1Q28b, III:26, "Recueil des bénédictions," Barthélemy and Milik, p. 124. See Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 208.

[4] J. Carmignac and P. Guilbert, Les textes de Qumran (2 vols.; Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1961), I, 136. Milik, Ten Years, p. 40, rightly point out that one looks in vain for similar tones in the rest of contemporary literature.

Righteousness, I know, is not of man,
nor is perfection of way of the son of man
to the Most High belong all righteous deeds.
. . . .
For I remember my sins and the unfaithfulness of my
fathers.
When the wicked rose against Thy Covenant
and the damned against Thy word,
I said in my sinfulness,
"I am forsaken by Thy covenant."
But calling to mind the might of Thy hand
and the greatness of Thy compassion,
I rose and stood,
and my spirit was established
in the face of the scourge.[1]

Another equally significant statement is:

By Thy goodness alone is man righteous,
and with Thy many mercies (Thou stregthenest him).[2]

Within this context the meaning of "covenant" focuses upon the promissory far more than on the contractual. Election of persons is pre-natal,[3] and grace enables the chosen ones to obey the commandments (often eschatologically radicalized) through the knowledge given to the sect's authentic interpreters of God's will.[4] It is significant that alongside phrases such as "covenant of justice" (ברית משפט),[1] there occur for the first time known in Jewish literature the phrases, ברית חסד,[2] and אל החסדים.[3] Matthew Black has pointed out that this is a continuation of the Psalmenfrömmgkeit, the spirit of profound trust in God's mercy in the Psalms, and in the prophets, especially attributed to the Hasidim.[4]

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[1] IQH IV:30-31, 34-36, Sukenik, plate 38. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 163-164.

[2] IQH XIII:16-17, Sukenik, plate 47. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 192.

[3] See IQH XV, Sukenik, plate 49; Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 194-196.

[4] Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 41. See also Menahem Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns ("Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah," Vol. III; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), p. 53.

Yet with this understanding of grace and election the sectarians regard most of Israel as impious and outside the covenant. The promises seem limited almost exclusively to those who join the sect. They can speak of "volunteers" for the Holy War.[5] It seems quite possible that there is an attempted parallel drawn between voluntary entrance into the sect and circumcision in the statement in the Damascus Document XVI:4-6: "And on the day that a man swears to return to the Law of Moses, the Angel of Hostility (Hebrew: המשטמה) shall cease to follow him provided he fulfills his word: for this reason Abraham circumcised himself on the day that he knew."[1] Also while the Priestly redactors of the Torah thought of a covenant with all mankind before the covenant with Abraham, there can hardly be said to be any universalistic dimensions in Qumran faith. Significantly the name of one of the standards in the War Rule is "Extermination of God for all the Nations of Vanity."[2] The eternal covenant excludes the Gentiles and most of the Israelites outside the sect. There is, it must be admitted, however, an indeterminate middle group of Israelites. Carmignac and Guilbert have summarized:

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[1] IQS VIII:9, Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery, Vol. II (New Haven: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951), plate VIII. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 85.

[2] IQS I:8, Burrows, ibid., plate I; Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 72. See also Jaubert, p. 131.

[3] IQM XIV:8, Sukenik, plate 29. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 142.

[4] Matthew Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 128.

[5] IQM VII:5, Sukenik, plate 22; Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 133. See also the statement in Ms. B of the CD concerning those who have entered the covenant of repentance (ברית תשובה) without forsaking the way of the faithless, CD VIII:4, Rabin, The Zadokite Documents, pp. 32-33. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 105.

> Les justes sont donce, par définition, les membres de sa Communauté, et les impies sont, en plus des paiens les Juifs qui la combattent. Mais, il semble admettre entre les deux groups une sorte de masse indéterminee, qu'il appelle 'Ton peuple' . . . et qui serait constituée par tous les Juifs n'ayant pas encore opté pour l'un ou l'autre des 'partis' qui les sollicitent. En faveur de sa Communauté des justes, l'auteur monopolise les textes de l'Ancien Testament sur le 'Reste d'Israël et sur l'Alliance.[3]

Thus at Qumran is a community intensely concerned with the covenant. Its members have a clear understanding of the beneficence of God's grace, without and beyond man's merit, but at the same time they are exclusivistic in their understanding of the covenant and limit it to the obedient like themselves (or those not friendly to their opponents). Yet the covenant community is open to those who will leave the perfidious world (on the basis of prior predestination to life) and voluntarily enter the covenant. As in the thinking of the writers of the JE epic, the Qumran sectarians do not think of grace and merit in terms of polarities or mutually exclusive ways of understanding the covenant relationship, but in terms of a single unified relationship. The community sees itself as the eschatological community of God. Yet it does not, like Paul, believe that the Messiah has come and has become the "end of the Law." It may well be that the sectarians, like John the Baptist and the primitive Christians, found it necessary to take a polemical position against the mechanical understanding of the Abrahamic covenant which was current in some Jewish circles.

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[1] Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings, p. 162, n. 2. Jaubert, p. 137. For Hebrew text, see Rabin, The Zadokite Documents, pp. 74-75.

[2] IQM IV:12, Sukenik, plate 19. See Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 129.

[3] Carmignac and Guilbert, I, 142.

Hellenistic Jewish Literature

In addition to the documents already discussed there are a number of documents composed by Jews living in the Diaspora for which there is presently no evidence of circulation within Palestine within the period under consideration.[1] The earliest of these documents are known only from brief quotations by later Christian fathers and by Josephus. Slightly later are II and III Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon. These definitely pre-Christian documents are followed by IV Maccabees and the writings of Philo, approximately contemporary with the birth and earliest growth of the Christian church. Finally from the period after the conclusion of the Jewish War there are the writings of Josephus.

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[1] The Aramaic edition of Josephus' The Jewish War is not an exception. The personal position of Josephus would certainly make him persona non grata among the patriots of Palestine. Also he indicates quite clearly that the first edition of his The Jewish War was intended not for Palestinians, but for "the barbarians in the interior." (The Jewish War, I.3 q.v. infra.)

Fragments from early Hellenistic Jewish writers. In this section we consider a number of historians and poets whose literary activity seems to fall within the period from ca. 220-100 B. C. Portions of their works are quoted by Josephus, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea.[1] All of the Abrahamic references (with the exception of a single parallel citation in Josephus) are found in Book IX of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*.

The historians among this group of early writers have two primary interests in Abraham: origins and genealogy; and Abraham as teacher of astrology. Demetrius, the earliest of these historians, is interested in Abraham only to the extent of identifying Canaan as the land where he was chosen from the nations[2] and in identifying Moses' wife, Zipporah, as a descendent of Abraham and Keturah.[1] Artapanus attempts an etymological derivation of "Hebrew" from Abraham[2] and indicates also the descent of the Arabs from Abraham.[3] Malchas (or Cleodemos) in a genealogy of Abraham's descendents through Keturah has Heracles marrying a granddaughter of Abraham, who gives birth to a son named Diodorus.[4] In some presumably Jewish anonymous fragments Abraham is said to be descended from the giants.[5] These same fragments present Abraham as the teacher of astrology to the Phoenicians,[6] as Artapanus presents him as teacher of astrology to Pharaoh.[7]

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[1] Pfeiffer, *History*, pp. 200-203, 211. Wallace Stearns, *Fragments from Graeco-Jewish Writers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1908), pp. 17, 30, 95, 100, 106.

[2] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, IX.21.16, (hereafter cited as *PE*). The text is that edited by Karl Mras in *Eusebius Werke*, Achter Band, Erster Teil, ("Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderte"; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954).

Perhaps the fullest, but at the same time most problematic fragment, is said to come from Eupolemus.[8] This fragment indicates Abraham's birth in Ur, his discovery of astrology and Χαλδαϊκήν and his pleasing of God with his piety (εὐσέβειαν). By God's command he dwells in Phoenicia and teaches the Phoenicians of the heavenly bodies. Later he rescues his nephew when the Armenians invade the Phoenicians (sic). After the victory he is admitted to the temple at Ἀργαριζίν, which is interpreted as meaning ὄρος ὑψίστον and receives gifts from Melchizedek, who is priest of God and ruler. He goes on to Egypt, deceives Pharaoh concerning Sarah's relationship to him, dwells with the priests at Heliopolis and teaches them astrology and other things which he and the Babylonians had discovered from Enoch. W. Stearns denies the Jewish origin of this fragment, regarding Eusebius as mistaken, and says on the basis of the Gerizim reference that it should be taken perhaps as from an anonymous Samaritan.[1] Against Stearns, however, it should be noted that the only peculiarly Samaritan modification seems to be the place of Melchizedek's priesthood. The other matters in the fragment are paralleled in writers clearly Jewish. It is known elsewhere that Jewish and Samaritan writers and copyists modified place names in accordance with their own peculiar interests.[2]

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[1] Eusebius, PE, IX.29.1.

[2] Ibid., IX.18.1.

[3] Ibid., IX.23.1.

[4] Ibid., IX.20.3-4. This fragment from Malchas (spelled Malchos there) is also cited by Josephus, infra. Stearns, p. 60, regards Malchas as possibly a Samaritan.

[5] Eusebius, PE, IX.18.2.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., IX.18.1.

[8] Ibid. IX.17.

Among the fragments from poets the faithfulness to the Biblical narrative is striking. Ezekiel in The Exodus simply has the self-identification of God to Moses at the burning bush as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[3] Philo the poet describes the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham's "glorious deed" concerning his "illustrious child," which is prepared with Abraham's loud laments.[1] Theodotus recounts the Biblical story of the rape of Dinah and Jacob's demand that the Shechemites be circumcised:

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[1] Stearns, p. 67.

[2] See Abram Spiro, "Manners of Rewriting Biblical History from Chronicles to Pseudo-Philo" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1953), p. 94, concerning the Septuagint modification of the place name in Joshua 24 from Shechem to Shiloh.

[3] Eusebius, PE, IX.28.8.

> The God who Abraham from his homeland had called
> Bade him from heaven to set his blood-stained seal
> On flesh of every male; and it was done
> And changeless still the law which God decreed.[2]

In the same fragment Theodotus presents Simeon, in his determination to avenge the honor of his sister, as recalling God's word to give ten (sic) nations to the children of Abraham.[3]

Thus the interest in Abraham in these fragments is primarily as a folk hero, teacher of culture, elect man of piety. He is the progenitor of a superior, but not exclusivistic race, and is the benefactor of mankind. His descendents are united with the Greeks genealogically quite early so that at least a certain amount of syncretism between Judaism and Hellenistic culture is inevitable and appropriate.

The Wisdom of Solomon, II, III, and IV Maccabees. In these four documents emanating from Hellenistic Judaism many of the motifs and emphases in the treatment of the Abraham tradition which appeared in the more widely circulated apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature already discussed occur. A number of these motifs, however, show modifications particularly expressive of the Hellenistic mentality.

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[1] Ibid., IX.20.1, following the translation of Stearns, pp. 96-97. Edwin H. Gifford, tr. and ed., Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel (2 vols.; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1903), I, 453, simply regards this as an unintelligible fragment.

[2] Ibid., IX.22.7, following the translation of Gifford, I, 459. Stearns, p. 100, regards Theodotus as possibly a Samaritan.

[3] Ibid., IX.22.9.

The Wisdom of Solomon, a document of Alexandrian Judaism of the first century B. C., is interested in the sacrifice of Isaac.[1] This document, however, accounts for Abraham's steadfastness in suffering through the agency of Wisdom. It is said (10:5, RSV) that Wisdom kept him strong "in the face of his compassion for his child." The same passage supports the tradition of the complete blamelessness of Abraham. In a series of historical illustrations of the power of Wisdom in the lives of Adam, Noah, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, it is said of Abraham: "And she (Wisdom), when the nations in wicked agreement had been confounded, knew the righteous one and kept him blameless before God." The Wisdom of Solomon also continues the interest in the covenant promises to Abraham, although this interest can hardly be said to be enthusiastic. The reason for rejoicing on the night of the last plague in Egypt before the Exodus is the remembrance of the oaths to the patriarchs (18:6); and Aaron is able to stop a plague in the desert by appeal to the oaths and covenants to the fathers (18:22).

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[1] Eissfeldt, p. 602. Pfeiffer, History, p. 327. Metzger, p. 67, dates it 100 B. C. - 40 A.D. Samuel Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," A&P, I, 521. Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), pp. 33-34 discusses the fragment of the Wisdom of Solomon found at Khirbet Mird, but indicates that all of the manuscripts found there come from the fifth to eighth centuries A. D.

II and III Maccabees, both originating in Greek in the Diaspora in the first century B. C.,[1] simply continue in a minor way some of the earlier emphases, but without peculiarly Hellenistic modification. In II Maccabees the greeting to the brethren in Egypt includes the pious wish that God will do good to them and remember the covenant to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, his faithful servants (1:2). III Maccabees, discussing Ptolemaic action against Alexandrian Jews, includes a prayer by a pious priest, Eleazar,for mercy upon Abraham's seed so that it may be said that God has not forgotten his people (6:2-3, 15). II Maccabees also indicates knowledge of the tradition of relationships between Jews and Spartans. The writer describes (5:9) the flight of the renegade priest, Jason, to Sparta (the Lacedaemonians), hoping to find protection "because of their kinship." Finally there is a single reference to the God of the Fathers in III Maccabees 7:16.[2]

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[1] On II Maccabees: Eissfeldt, p. 581. Pfeiffer, History, p. 499. James Moffatt, "2 Maccabees," A&P, I, 129. Some scholars posit a Hebrew original for the prefatory letters, e.g., Eissfeldt, pp. 578, 581. On this, however, cf. Pfeiffer, History, p. 508, and Moffatt, 129-30.

On III Maccabees: Eissfeldt, p. 582. Pfeiffer, History, p. 203. Cyril Emmet, "3 Maccabees," A&P, I, 155, dates it in the second century B. C.

[2] Among other references of minor significance there is a statement in the Sibylline Oracles, Book III (dated second century B. C. by Eissfeldt, p. 616; Pfeiffer, History, p. 227; and H. C. O. Lanchester, "The Sibylline Oracles," A&P, II, 370; and generally acknowledged to be Egyptian in origin) concerning a race of most righteous men who came out of Ur and ever give themselves to sound counsel and fair deeds (vss. 218-220).

The most thoroughgoing modification of the Hebrew tradition in these documents in the direction of Hellenistic ideals occurs in IV Maccabees. This document, dependent upon II Maccabees, is a treatise upon the theme that the reason is the mistress of the passions.[1] This document is generally dated early in the first century A. D. (although Dupont-Sommer insists on assigning it to the beginning of the reign of Hadrian, following the Jewish insurrections under Trajan).[2] The treatise takes as its heroes not the Maccabean brothers, but a family of martyrs from that age--the priest Eleazar, his wife, and seven sons. The Biblical event which provides the example for this family is the sacrifice of Isaac, with interest focused on both Abraham and Isaac.

In 7:14 it is said of Eleazar (who in 6:16 had said that it would be contrary to reason for sons of Abraham to deny the faith after following it to old age) that "with Isaac-like reason" (τῷ Ἰσακίῳ λογισμῷ) he turned many-headed torture to impotence. The suffering of the first son without groaning is described (9:21) as being "like a true son of Abraham." In chapter 13 the brothers encourage one another by remembering of what stock they are and (13:12) "at whose fatherly hand Isaac for piety's sake yielded himself to be a sacrifice" (σφαγιασθῆναι διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν). The mother of the seven brothers overcomes her natural maternal yearning for them (14:20) "with a soul like Abraham" (ὁμόψυχον). She willingly surrenders her sons "as a true daughter of Abraham, as she calls to mind his God-fearing courage" (15:28). She says to her sons that they owe their life to God and also owe it to him to endure pain for his sake as did both Abraham and Isaac in the sacrifice of Isaac (16:19-20). In the final lauding of this woman it is said, according to the best manuscript witness, that her childbearing was from the father Abraham[1] (17:6). The point clearly seems to be that she is an Abraham-like parent in her willingness, through reason, to give up her sons. This woman, as a daughter of Abraham, in the righteousness which flows from inspired reason's lordship over the passions, is gathered with the ancestors along with her sons. There they receive pure and immortal souls from God (18:23). It is significant that while praising the rule of reason, this document does not take the Stoic goal of extirpation of the passions, but rather exhorts the control of the passions through obedience to reason.[2]

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[1] Eissfeldt, p. 614.

[2] Pfeiffer, *History*, p. 215. R. B. Townshend, "4 Maccabees," *A&P*, II, 654, 657. Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrieme Livre des Machabées* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1939), pp. 78-81. See also Eissfeldt, p. 615, for summary of positions on dating.

IV Maccabees further goes beyond other documents discussed and presents Abraham and the other patriarchs as not even dying. This is the ultimate reward for the blameless life. The objection is raised in the book that not all men have their reason enlightened. The writer answers that as many as with their whole heart make righteousness their first thought, these alone are able to master the weakness of the flesh believing that unto God they do not die as the patriarchs did not die, but live unto God (7:18-19). The brothers encourage themselves with the belief that after their passion Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will receive them (13:16); and their mother encourages them with the conviction that men dying for God live unto God, as live Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the patriarchs (16:24). Thus the immortality of the patriarchs becomes a goal for the reader, just as their obedience to reason is the reader's model for life.

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[1] See Rahlfs edition of the Septuagint. Codex Alexandrinus, which Townshend follows in A&P, has "from the son of Abraham" but in the context this is less likely the original.

[2] Townshend, A&P, II, 653.

Philo of Alexandria. The writings of Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B. C. - ca. 45 A. D.) from the period around the turn of the era comprise the most voluminous collection of Hellenistic Jewish literature.[1] E. R. Goodenough has pointed out that the deeper one goes into Philo's writings, the more inextricably mixed Judaism and Hellenism appear.[1] The Hellenistic influence is typical of the Hellenistic age in its eclecticism, "using a mosaic of terms derived from all kinds of opposite schools of thought, but moulded by their users, if they used them understandingly, to a common consistent meaning."[2] Philo's concern, as he makes use of his knowledge of Greek philosophy and religion as well as the Jewish Scriptures, is primarily to show the contemporary significance of the ancient Jewish writings, so that the ancient experiences of the people of Israel are made also a present reality in the reader's experience.[3]

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[1] All Philonic citations are from *Philo*, ed. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and Ralph Marcus (10 vols. and 2 supplements; "The Loeb Classical Library"; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929-1953). The following treatises are cited: *De Abrahamo* (*Abr.*); *De Cherubim* (*Cher.*); *De Confusione Linguarum* (*Conf.*); *De Congressu Eruditionis gratia* (*Cong.*); *De Decalogo* (*Dec.*): *Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari soleat* (*Det.*); *De Ebrietate* (*Ebr.*); *De Fuga et Inventione* (*Fug.*); *De Gigantibus* (*Gib.*); *Legum Allegoriae* (*Leg. All.*); *De Migratione Abrahami* (*Mig.*); *De Vita Mosis* (*Mos.*); *De Mutatione Nomimun* (*Mut.*); *De Posteritate Caini* (*Post.*): *De Praemiis et Poenis* (*Praem.*); *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin* (*QG*); *Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit* (*Quis Her.*); *Quod Deus Immutabilis sit* (*Quod Deus*); *Quod omnis Probus liber* (*Quod Omn. Prob.*); *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* (*Sac.*); *De Sobrietate* (*Sob.*): *De Somniis* (*Som.*); *De Specialibus Legibus* (*Spec.Leg.*); *De Virtutibus* (*Virt.*).

Philo's relationship to other expressions of Jewish faith historically contemporary with him remains an open question and the subject of debate.[4] Recent developments in Biblical studies (especially since the Qumran discoveries), however, has made suspicious any attempt to deny interaction among the various expressions of Jewish faith and has lent support to the contention of Harry Wolfson that Alexandrian Judaism did not detach itself from its native source, nor did it remain completely unaffected by the subsequent development of Judaism in Palestine.[1]

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[1] Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 116.

[2] Harry A. Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), I, 102.

[3] Sidney G. Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews ("Basel Studies of Theology," No. 1; Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1965), p. 32. Samuel Sandmel, Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1956), p. 100.

[4] Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 78, denies knowledge of oral Torah. S. Belkin, Philo and the Oral Law ("Harvard Semitic Series," Vol. XI; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940), passim, argues for the knowledge of it, as does Wolfson, I, 56-57. Wolfson regards Alexandrian Judaism as a collateral branch of Pharisaic Judaism. He, I, 91, assumes a fourfold relationship between Philo and the rabbis: (a) some traditions are from common sources brought from the homeland; (b) some are arrived at independently through common methods of interpretation; (c) some are borrowings from contemporary Palestinian Jews through various channels of communication; (d) some are borrowed by Palestinian Jews from the works of Philo, probably by hearsay.

Philo's method in accomplishing this purpose is the use of the allegorical method, the method of interpretation employed very generally in the Hellenistic world and especially developed among the Stoics.[2] Taking a position between the extreme allegorists and the extreme traditionalists, Philo insists on the significance of the literal text but seeks a more profound meaning.[3] Literal and allegorical meanings are understood as being one upon the other rather than side by side.[4] The former is the natural and obvious meaning suited for the multitude, and the latter is for the "few who study soul characteristics rather than bodily forms."[5] Philo sees scripture as given by prophets while under the hypnotic spell of the divine spirit, often writing of things which they themselves did not understand, containing multiple meanings, the most important of which lies buried on the hidden level accessible only by allegorical interpretation.[1] He believed there was nothing superfluous in the scriptures. He says, "Do not let any subtle point escape your notice, for you will not find a single pointless expression".[2] For his own interpretations he distinguishes three sources: tradition, inspiration (analogous to prophetic inspiration), and research and reflection.[3]

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[1] Wolfson, I, 56-57. Philo's statements concerning his visits to Jerusalem, as well as his admiration of the Essenes, are additional support from primary sources.

[2] Émile Bréhier, Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie, third edition (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1950), pp. 36, 44. For historical survey, see Sowers, pp. 11-19.

[3] Wolfson, I, 73, 56-57. See also, e. g., the discussion of circumcision in Mig. 92. See also Abr. 88.

[4] Sowers, p. 28.

[5] Abr. 147.

It must be noted at the same time that Philo does not always give both the literal and allegorical levels of meaning of a passage of scripture. There seems to be a unity of meaning for him, and he can move from one level to the other without clearly defined limits. In interpreting the patriarchal narratives he treats these figures as clearly historical, but sees their significance as transcending the merely historical. Also just as he takes it as an exegetical axiom that anthropomorphic statements about God are not to be understood literally, he likewise insists in the interpretation of the patriarchal stories that no statement must be interpreted in any way

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1. Sowers, p. 40 (Quod Omn. Prob. 80; Abr. 258; Spec. Leg. IV, 49).

2. Leg. All. III, 147.

3. Bréhier, p. 45. Concerning tradition, see Mos. II, 98; concerning inspiration, see Cher. 27, also Mig. 34-35, and Sowers, p. 40; concerning research, see Mos. II, 122. The determination of the particular audiences to whom the individual treatises were addressed remains a matter of conjecture, as does the order of their writing. Also a reader of Philo's works notes that he is neither completely consistent nor easily systematized.

unworthy of these figures.[1]

Because of the very large number of Philonic treatises in which some aspect of the Abraham tradition is discussed and because of the extensive rambling in Philo's methodology, his understanding of Abraham is best treated topically. In a number of areas his treatment is quite similar to that of other documents already discussed, although the presuppositions of Hellenistic philosophy are more pervasively present. There are five aspects of his presentation of Abraham which merit detailed presentation: the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham as a model of Hellenistic Jewish piety, the patriarchs as means of grace, the migration of Abraham, and Abraham's relationship to Sarah, Hagar, and Isaac.

In his discussion of the Biblical phrase, "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Philo speaks of these patriarchs being united in this name,[2] and also he speaks of God as being Abraham's God in a special sense and by special grace.[3] He says elsewhere, however, that this title is a matter of the divine condescension to natural weakness[4] and is a license of language.[5] Throughout his writing Philo sees these names as representing the three ways of gaining wisdom--by teaching, by nature, by practice.[1] He says that each of the patriarchs possesses the three qualities, but each gets his name from that which chiefly predominates in him.[2] It is significant that in his presentation of these proto-patriarchs Isaac, not Abraham, is of the highest rank. Prerogatives are allotted to that which he represents which none contests. Isaac, who is self-taught in his virtue, is the Son of God, while Abraham is God's pupil;[3] his place in the afterlife is higher;[4] he needs no change of name,[5] nor multiple wives;[6] and Philo's greatest hero, Moses, is more like Isaac in his way of gaining virtue than like the other patriarchs.[7]

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[1] As this relates to Abraham, see QG IV, 60.

[2] Abr. 51.

[3] Gig. 62.

[4] Mos. I, 76.

[5] Mut. 11-12.

The Abrahamic covenant. In his interpretation of the covenant relationship in the patriarchal stories Philo allegorizes the meaning of the covenant and shows considerable interest in the details both of the story of the cutting of the animals and the sign of circumcision. He defines the covenant as consisting of "all the incorporeal principles, forms, and measures for the whole of all things of which this world was made."[1] He describes the highest form of covenants as "I myself,"[2] and interprets the setting of the covenant between Abraham and God as the establishment of the relationship in which there is nothing between God and the soul except the virgin grace.[3] He takes the promise of posterity "like the stars" to refer to likeness rather than number.[4] While not denying the eternal gift of the land of Canaan (since even though the mind of the virtuous man is a sojourner in the corporeal place, it is given authority over earthly things to rule[5]), Philo is more interested in the deeper meaning of the promise of land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates. For him this refers to the better part in man--from (in the sense of exclusion) the body and its passions (River of Egypt) to the soul and what the soul loves (Euphrates);[6] or from corporeal goods to the spiritual.[7] In interpreting the ancient ceremony of Genesis 15 Philo sees this as representing the cutting of soul, speech, and sense (but not divine and human reason which are represented by the turtle dove and pigeon) by

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[1] This is a commonplace in ancient literature, see Vol. VIII, p. 453, of The Loeb Classical Library edition of Philo. See notes 4, 5, p.132, Supra. One passage, Mig. 25, is unique in Philo, calling Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the threefold divisions of eternity.

[2] Abr. 53.

[3] Som. I, 173.

[4] Sac. 5.

[5] Mut. 88.

[6] Congr. 34.

[7] Sac. 9. See also Goodenough, By Light, Light, p. 199. In Praem. 65 Philo speaks of Jacob as becoming the plenitude of virtue, having the triple excellence of nature, learning, and practice, engendering twelve sons, the copy and likeness of the zodiac cycle.

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[1] QG III, 40, 42.

[2] Mut. 58. See also QG III, 42.

[3] Mut. 52-53.

[4] Quis Her. 86-87.

[5] QG III, 45.

[6] Som. II, 255-60. See also Quis Her. 314.

[7] QG III, 16.

God's Logos which, whetted to an edge of utmost sharpness, never ceases to divide.[1] Relying upon the Septuagint reading he pictures Abraham among the birds coming down to the carcasses as the man of worth seated in the company of the enemies of the soul to restrain them like a chairman or council president.[2]

Philo defends the literal keeping of the covenant requirement of circumcision,[3] and gives a combination of reasons for its practice, some dealing with its physical value and some with its spiritual meaning, some traditional and some apparently original. Among the traditional reasons he states its prophylactic value, its hygienic value, the assimilation of the shape of the circumcised member to that of the heart (the other generative organ), and the promotion of fertility.[4] He adds two additional reasons, viz., excision of pleasures which bewitch the mind and secondly the self-knowledge and banishment from the soul of the malady of conceit.[5] He clearly distinguishes between two circumcisions--one of the flesh (genitals) and one of the male (through reason) and relates the latter to the removal of the hardness of heart, becoming pure and naked of every evil and passion and becoming a priest of God.[1] Finally in explaining the significance of the eighth day for circumcision (eight being a cube, all dimensions equal; and equality being a producer of righteousness) Philo says that Israel was chosen as foremost of the human race, not by creation or time, but by prerogative of virtue.[2]

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[1] Quis Her. 106, 126, 129, 130, 132.

[2] Quis Her. 243. He says in 247 that although Moses uses the same word for birds, there are two kinds. Only the Septuagint Moses has the same word; the Hebrew text has two different words. A similar interpretation is given in QG III,4-9.

[3] Mig. 92.

[4] Spec. Leg. I, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8. Note also that in QG III, 51 not only the soul, but also the body profits from the oversight of the Divine Word.

[5] Spec. Leg. I, 8-10. See also QG III, 48, and Mig. 92.

Philo interprets the verb in Genesis 12:3 (following the Septuagint) as passive, "shall be blessed." This means for him blessing of the whole man when the mind continues free from harm and sickness,[3] He also makes much of its literal meaning. He relates it specifically to Judaism's priesthood to humanity.[4] Even though he thinks primarily in terms of the magnetic power of rational thought, still the universal dimensions of Israel's mission are clearly stated. In The Migration of Abraham he says:

> Furthermore there have been instances of a household or a city or a country or nations and regions of the earth enjoying great prosperity through a single man giving his mind to nobility of character. Most of all has this been so in the case of one on whom God has bestowed, together with a good purpose, irresistible power, just as He gives to the musician and every artist the instruments which his music or his art requires, or as He gives to fire logs

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1. QG III, 46.

2. QG III, 49.

3. Mig. 118-19.

4. Abr. 98; Mos. I, 149; Spec. Leg. II, 163.

as its material. For in truth the righteous man is the foundation on which mankind rests.[1]

Abraham as model of Hellenistic Jewish piety. Like many other writers of intertestamental Jewish literature Philo is interested in presenting Abraham as an example of perfect Jewish piety. His definition of piety is deeply influenced by his intellectual environment so that Abraham is presented not only as keeper of Jewish Torah (which is itself given a special Philonic interpretation), but also as exhibiting those virtues admired by Hellenistic philosophers and moralists in general and indeed assuming the role of the philosopher king. Just as the author of Jubilees presents Abraham's piety in terms of the religiosity of his own community, so also Philo represents Abraham as embodying ideal Hellenistic Jewish piety at the turn of the era.

In several places Philo speaks of Abraham as the perfect man[2] and as one with unchanging soul worthy of God's secret mysteries.[3] In On the Virtues he even speaks of his nature's "more than human perfection":

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[1] Mig. 120. Philo speaks of the five gifts of God to Abraham: (a) the land--a life of contemplation; (b) to become a great nation in number and quality--progress towards abundance and greatness of things fair and beautiful; (c) blessing or excellence of reason and speech; (d) a great name, both in reputation and fact; (e) being, as opposed to seeming, surpassing all other gifts. See Mig. 43, 53, 70, 71, 73, 83, 106.

[2] QG IV, 33; IV, 66; III, 40 (free from all blame); Mut. 270 (God perfected Abraham); Abr. 192 (never neglected any commands of God).

[3] Leg. All. III, 27; Post. 27.

> For the divine Spirit which was breathed upon him from on high made its lodging in his soul and invested his body with singular beauty, his voice with persuasiveness, and his hearers with understanding.[1]

Abraham's piety has both the dimensions of holiness to God and the discharge of responsibilities to man. Philo remarks that while he does not forget reverence to God, neither does he forget the calls of our common humanity.[2] Philo uses the visit of the angels at Mamre as a foundation for this:

> Seeing the vision before his eyes, which was not constant, being at one time that of God, at another time that of strangers, he decided to show piety as toward God and equal oneness and love of man toward the strangers.[3]

He is said to have taken as his ideal a life free from strife and one of tranquillity[4] and to have become the standard of nobility for all proselytes, who, abandoning strange laws, monstrous customs, and idolatry come to a commonwealth full of true life and vitality, with truth as its director and president.[5]

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[1] Virt. 217. Wolfson, I, 451-52, points out that Philo does not state absolutely whether this means that the patriarchs were completely sinless during their lifetimes and that there are some paragraphs which would seem to deny this. He points also to conflicting opinions on this question among the rabbis. Abr. 6 certainly seems to exclude absolute sinlessness.

[2] Mut. 46. See also Abr. 208.

[3] QG IV, 2.

[4] Abr. 216.

[5] Virt. 219.

Philo is particularly interested in Abraham's hospitality, especially as accepted by the angels at Mamre.[1] He presents him as a man of reasonable moderation in such matters as his conduct toward Lot, connected to him by birth, but estranged in moral principles,[2] and in his constrained show of emotion at the death of Sarah.[3] He insists that while Abraham was father of many children by three wives, this was motivated not by indulgence in pleasure, but in hope of multiplying the race.[4] He even says that Abraham took Hagar until she became pregnant and then abstained from her through natural continence and the honor he paid to Sarah.[5] On the allegorical level he says that Moses presents the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses as not knowing women, since woman signifies a sense perception; and knowledge comes through estrangement from sense and body.[6]

Philo shares the conviction of other writers concerning the eternity of the Torah, a belief current at least as early as ben Sira. He thus presents the patriarchs as keepers of the Torah before it was promulgated by Moses. Philo's particular point of view, however, is that the Torah of Israel is identical with natural law. The lives of the patriarchs are historical examples of the possibility of living according to the eternal natural law.

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[1] See, e. g., Abr. 115; QG IV, 33.

[2] Abr. 211.

[3] Abr. 256-57.

[4] Virt. 207.

[5] Abr. 253.

[6] Cher. 40-41.

> There are such men as lived good and blameless lives, whose virtues stand permanently recorded in the most holy scriptures, not merely to sound their praises, but for the instruction of the reader and as an inducement to him to aspire to the same; for in these men we have laws endowed with life and reason, and Moses extolled them for two reasons. First he wished to shew that the enacted ordinances are not inconsistent with nature; and secondly that those who wish to live in accordance with the laws as they stand have no difficult task, seeing that the first generations before any at all of the particular statutes was set in writing followed the unwritten law with perfect ease, so that one might properly say that the enacted laws are nothing else than memorials of the life of the ancients, preserving to a later generation their actual words and deeds. For they were not scholars or pupils of others, nor did they learn under teachers what was right to say or do: they listened to no voice or instruction but their own: they gladly accepted conformity with nature, holding that nature itself was, as indeed it is, the most venerable of statutes, and thus their whole life was one of happy obedience to law.[1]

Indeed Philo goes beyond this. He calls Abraham himself a law and unwritten statute.[2]

Philo states that the cultic laws, "the eternal offerings" take their origin from Abraham[3] and at one place interprets the property and gifts bequeathed by Abraham to Isaac and his other sons as corresponding to the natural and positive laws.[4] Consistent with his presentation of the patriarchs as keeping the Torah are numerous references to the relationship between God and Abraham as being one of reward for faithfulness. He says that Abraham was chosen for his merits,[1] that the appearance of the angels at Mamre was a divine recognition of Abraham's wisdom,[2] that the confirmation of the promise was a repayment for Abraham's faithfulness,[3] and that even the gift of belief was a reward for "adopting the godly creed."[4] In direct contradiction to Deuteronomy he says elsewhere that Israel was chosen by prerogative of virtue.[5]

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[1] Abr. 5-6. See also Abr. 60 and 275.

[2] Abr. 276. See also Dec. 1.

[3] QG III, 3.

[4] Mig. 94.

Throughout his writings Philo gives to Abraham the title of the Sage (ὁ σόφος).[6] With the use of the Septuagint translation of Genesis 23:6 (βασιλεύς) he is able to present Abraham as the prototype of the philosopher king of the Greek philosophers.[7] His is the true kingship, that of mind rather than material resources, one established by God's election. This is indeed the major thrust of Philo's treatment of the battle of the kings and Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek. He sees Abraham victorious over nine (sic) kings, symbolizing the four passions and five sense faculties rising in unnatural

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1. Abr. 83.

2. Abr. 118.

3. Abr. 273.

4. Praem. 27.

5. QG III, 49.

6. Passim. Praem. 58 speaks of his transformation from sophist to sage by his monotheism.

7. See Som. II, 243-44; Mut. 152; Abr. 260; Virt. 216-17; QG IV, 76. See also Abr. 272 where he is πρῶτος τοῦ ἀνθρώπων γένους

rebellion,[1] overlords corruptible and sources of corruption.[2] Abraham comes, however, as manifestation of the Logos, whose stronghold is in the virtues, whose place in numerical order is the perfect number ten, and with God's help, is victorious.[3] He meets with Melchizedek, king of peace and priest of God, holder of that priesthood whose tradition he learned from no one except himself.[4] Melchizedek is also a manifestation of the Logos, and he gives bread and wine so that they may be seized with a divine intoxication more sober than sobriety.[5] Abraham's tithe is allegorized as the right use of sense from the things of sense, good speaking from the things of speech, and good thinking from the things of thought.[6] Abraham's refusal to take booty represents his refusal to exchange reasonable beings for things without reason and is a rebuke to idolators who deify the mortal.[7] At the same time, as Goodenough points out, Philo does not indicate precisely the significance of this meeting for Abraham's spiritual development.[1]

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[1] *Abr*. 105. See also *Conf*. 26.

[2] *Abr*. 244. He describes the battle in some detail (night attack, complete slaughter, his own army unhurt, and magnificent triumph) in *Abr*. 232 ff.

[3] *Abr*. 244.

[4] *Leg*. *All*. III, 79-85; *Congr*. 98.

[5] *Leg*. *All*. III, 79-85.

[6] *Congr*. 98.

[7] *Leg*. *All*. III, 24. (See LXX of Gen. 14:21, ἵππον , whereas the *word*, רכש , used in the Hebrew text for "goods" can mean "cattle.").

Although Abraham is presented as a perfect example of Hellenistic Jewish piety, Philo occasionally admits flaws in his character. He speaks of his inability to trust that he would have a son,[2] his doubt which had to be accustomed to the acquisition of virtues,[3] and the postponement of Isaac's birth to give Abraham time for completing a reformation.[4] More frequently, however, Philo modifies the clear meaning of the Genesis account to protect Abraham's character. The question to God (Gen. 15:2), "What will you give me?" is interpreted as a statement of thanksgiving, i.e., "What more could you give me?"[5] The question (Gen. 15:8), "How am I to know that I shall possess it (the land)?" shows trust in God and immense desire not to be without certain signs.[6] The laughter of Abraham at the announcement that he would have a son in his old age is interpreted in the most positive way as a rejoicing without even a hint of incredulity.[1] There is nothing deceitful in the Abimelech story,[2] and even the admission of doubt concerning the promise of God is hardly more than a statement of Abraham's mortality and distinction from God. His doubt never progresses from his mind to his lips.

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[1] Goodenough, By Light, Light, p. 151. Among the other titles of some significance in Philo's treatment of Abraham (all consistent with his role as an incarnation of the Logos and a philosopher king) are: (a) elder, referring to his worth and honor rather than age, Sob. 17-18; (b) friend of God, Sob.55, Som. I, 193-95, Abr. 273; (c) prophet, Virt. 218, QG III, 9, Quis Her. 248 (with reference to the experience of prophetic ecstasy), QG IV, 90 (legislating oracularly concerning things to come); (d) kinsman of angels, Abr. 116, see also QG III, 1.

[2] Leg. All. III, 83-85.

[3] QG IV, 2.

[4] QG IV, 12.

[5] Quis Her. 31.

[6] QG III, 2.

Philo also protects Sarah's character from anything unworthy. In her "goodness of soul and beauty of body" she surpassed all the women of her time.[3] Although he occasionally admits that the promise of a son seemed incredible to both Abraham and Sarah, he usually regards her laughter at the announcement in a more positive way.[4] Her laughter is an expression of joy;[5] her fear is simply that she may be grasping for too much, since joy belongs to God alone.[6] Even the rebuke of Sarah indicates praise rather than blame.[7] Her barrenness is only a barrenness to evil;[1] her gift of Hagar to Abraham is due to excessive wifely love;[2] her treatment of Hagar is salutary;[3] and Hagar flees because she feels unworthy to live with her mistress.[4] Even Sarah's repentance after giving Hagar to Abraham is due to Abraham's weakness in his continuing delight in school studies.[5]

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[1] Mut. 154-55; QG III, 55-56; Leg. All. III, 217-19. QG III, 58, "Your faith is not ambiguous, but unhesitating."

[2] Mut. 175-81, 186.

[3] Abr. 99.

[4] Abr. 111-12. Even in Abr. 112 she remembers then her childhood teaching that all things are possible with God.

[5] QG IV, 16; Leg. All. 217-19.

[6] QG IV, 19; Abr. 202-205.

[7] QG IV, 17.

The patriarchs as means of grace. Philo sometimes speaks of the three patriarchs as Graces.[6] They are not only recipients of God's grace, but are the *means* of this grace for others.[7] His most explicit statement on the merits of the fathers as providing a means of grace is in *The Special Laws*, IV:

> Nevertheless as Moses tells us the orphan-like desolate state of his people is always an object of pity and compassion to the Ruler of the Universe whose portion it is, because it has been set apart out of the whole human race as a kind of first fruits to the Maker and Father. And the cause of this was the precious signs of righteousness and virtue shown by the founders of the race, signs which survive like imperishable plants, bearing fruit that never decays for their descendents, fruit salutary and profitable in every way, even though these descendents themselves be sinners, so long as the sins be curable and not altogether unto death.[8]

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[1] *Mut*. 143.

[2] *QG* III, 20.

[3] *QG* III, 25.

[4] *QG* III, 29.

[5] *QG* III, 23. See allegorical significance of his two wives *infra*.

[6] *Abr*. 54.

[7] *Mig*. 12.

[8] *Spec*. *Leg*. IV, 180-81.

W. Richardson in his study of the Philonic patriarchs as νόμος ἔμψυχος has suggested that it is precisely in Philo's understanding of the patriarchs as being themselves unwritten laws and statutes that he thinks of the patriarchs as means of grace, as concrete archetypes and paradigms which men can copy as they should copy the Ideal Archetype and Pattern, the Logos. They appear then as mediators of grace and life because from them men can take into their souls the true impression which brings salvation and immortality just as they are urged to take it from the incorporeal Logos.[1]

An aspect of Philo's thought closely related to this, but extending beyond it, is his interest in Abraham as intercessor. In his interpretation of Abraham's intercession for Sodom he places significance on the numbers fifty and ten. The intercession ranges from the possibility of complete redemption to the lower possibility that the lower training may be accepted to respite the soul which stands on the verge of condemnation, interpreting Abraham's feeling that if we cannot be completely good we choose as good as possible.[2] He points out that Lot was saved not for his own sake, but for Abraham's sake, who had prayed for him,[3] and that Abimelech's women bore after Abraham's prayer, as When the Father wishes to do some kindness to someone He considers this a special grace to the wise man.[1] He points out further that Abraham's intercession is not only for the salvation of the righteous, but for others' salvation for their sake.[2] Elsewhere Abraham is called a healer of our race, a genuine and true apothecary and dispeller of evils,[3] savior of nations and intercessor with God, the one who seeks forgiveness for his countrymen who have committed sins.[4] Abraham's servant in his mission of seeking a wife for Isaac blesses by the Lord God of my Lord Abraham because he saw himself as an attendant of the intercessor who was servant of the Creator.[5]

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[1] W. Richardson, "The Philonic Patriarchs as Νόμος Ἔμψυχος," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur, LXIII* ("Studia Patristica," Vol. I; *Berlin: Akademie-Verlag,* 1957), 524-25. He points especially to *Mos*. I, 158-59, and *Conf*. 146.

[2] *Mut*. 228.

[3] *QG* IV, 54. The deeper meaning is that when the Father remembers a perfect family, he also saves its kinsmen and the progressive man.

The migration of Abraham. Philo understands the migration of Abraham on the two levels of the literal migration of a man of wisdom, but allegorically also as the pilgrimage of the virtue-loving soul in its search for the true God.[6] The migration is from his father's house, his country, and his kindred, understood allegorically as the body, sense perception, and speech.[7] At the point at which God spoke to him commanding him to migrate, his soul became naked of the irrational by which the rational was hidden (although here Philo also makes the comparison that Isaac is always naked).[1] Abraham's starting point is the same as the highest point reached by Noah in a kind of history of the advancement of the soul.[2] In the earliest period of his life Abraham lived in the land of the Chaldeans, who are interpreted by Philo as pantheistic astrologers who attribute to the created the power of the Creator.[3] Here the patriarch, the astrologer and meteorologist, is called by the appropriate name of Abram or "Uplifted Father."[4] Although Abram was reared in this environment, he followed the ray and discerned the pilot of the universe.[5] His perception of monotheism induced him to leave Chaldea, and he is the first person spoken of as believing in God.[6] He followed his vision, drawn to it as iron to a magnet.[7] The migration had a preliminary stop at Haran, which is interpreted by Philo as representing sense perception,[8] Leaving this stage of Socratic introspection, Abraham departs to contemplate God.[9] His migration leads to the wilderness (Negeb in the Hebrew text), the place of solitude for the mystic seeking God.[10]

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[1] *QG* IV, 70.

[2] *QG* IV, 27.

[3] *QG* III, 10.

[4] *QG* III, 44.

[5] *QG* IV, 114.

[6] *Abr*. 68.

[7] *Leg*. *All*, III, 42; *Quod Deus* 159; *Mig*. 2; *Quis Her*.69.

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1. Leg. All. II, 58.
2. Post. 174.
3. Mig. 176-79; Abr. 69; QG III, 1; Virt. 212.
4. Gig. 62-64; Abr. 82.
5. Abr. 71.
6. Virt. 213-214, 216.
7. Praem. 58.
8. Mig. 187 ff., 198-99; Som. I, 47, 59-60; Abr. 72.
9. Mig. 189. See editorial note in Vol. VI, p. 41, of The Loeb Classical Library edition of Philo.
10. Abr. 85, 87.

Although in the Genesis text the change of names is a part of the establishment of the covenant, in Philo's mind it is more appropriately related to the stages of Abraham's pilgrimage, as betterments of the soul.[1] The significance of the change from Abram ("Uplifted Father") to Abraham (for Philo, "Elect Father of Sound") is summarized in On the Giants:

> Thus Abraham, while he sojourned in the land of the Chaldeans--sojourned, that is, in mere opinion--and with his name as yet unchanged from Abram, was a "man of heaven." He searched into the nature of the supraterrestrial and ethereal region, and his philosophy studied the events and changes which there occur, and their causes and the like. And therefore he received a name suitable to the studies which he pursued. For "Abram" being interpreted is the uplifted father, a name which signifies that mind which surveys on every side the whole compass of the upper world of heaven, called father-mind because this mind which reaches out to the ether and further still is the father of our compound being. But when he has risen to a better state and the time is at hand that his name should be changed, he becomes a man of God according to the oracle which was vouchsafed to him, "I am thy God: walk before Me according to My pleasure, and show thyself blameless." Now if the God of the Universe, the only God, is also his God in a special sense and by special grace, he surely must needs be himself a man of God. For he is called Abraham, by interpretation, "the elect father of sound," that is, "the good man's reasoning." Good, because it is elect, and purified; reasoning, because reason is the father of the voice, through which comes the sound of speech common to us all. Such a reasoning has the one and only God for its owner; it becomes God's companion and makes straight the path of its whole life, treading the true "King's way," the way of the one sole almighty king, swerving and turning aside neither to the right nor to the left.[2]

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[1] See, e. g., Mut. 65.

[2] Gig. 62-64. See also Cher. 7; Mut. 66, 69, 76 (from nature study to ethical philosophy); Abr. 81-82; QG III, 43 (significance of the additional alpha in the Greek spelling of the name).

Abraham's progression from the study of nature to the knowledge of its Maker has a parallel in the change of his wife's name from Sarai ("My Sovereighty") to Sarah ("Sovereign"), indicating a change from specific to generic virtue.[1] The change to Sarah, the incorruptible vis-à-vis the corruptible, is said to have been granted to her in advance for the sake of the birth of a more perfect happiness and joy, of which the name is Isaac.[2]

In all this pilgrimage Abraham sets his vision on that which transcends the material, considering the future as already present because of the steadfastness of God. This unswerving reliance on God and the expectation of what is to be (rather than on accomplished facts) is said to be in conformity with nature and seems a marvel only because of the untrustfulness of most of us.[3]

The pilgrimage ends when Abraham is added to his people or to his fathers. Philo indicates a number of possible interpretations of this reality, but none really indicate genuine death. At one point he says that this refers to the people to come after him, spoken of as if already in existence.[4] Usually, however, he takes this as a reference to the incorruptibility of

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1. Cher. 7; Mut. 77-78; QG III, 53.
2. QG III, 53.
3. Mig. 43-44; Quis Her. 91; Virt. 215; Praem. 30.
4. QG IV, 153.

the soul.[1] He indicates that according to some interpreters this means the elements, but he prefers to interpret this as indicating the "incorporeal logoi of the divine world," elsewhere called angels, or the stars or archetypal ideas.[2] In interpreting Abraham's purchase of the double cave Philo insists that the wise man does not seek a grave, but possession of a grave, since the body is the grave of the soul. Rather he seeks possession of a grave, that is to say, lordship and authority over it.[3] It is significant, however, that in his discussion of Abraham's ultimate end, Philo conceives Isaac's end to be higher. While Abraham is added to his fathers, Isaac is added to his race or genus, which is higher, and Moses stands in the very presence of God himself.[4]

This pilgrimage on earth in the body is for Philo a symbol of the earthly sojourn of all wise men, who have heaven as their real place of dwelling and are on earth through necessity.[5] He summarizes this point of view:

> This is why all whom Moses calls wise are represented as sojourners. Their souls are never colonists leaving heaven for a new home. Their way is to visit earthly

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1. QG III, 11; Sac. 5.

2. QG III, 11; Quis Her. 280-281; Sac. 5.

3. QG IV, 75.

4. Sac. 6-8. See also Wolfson, I, 404, where he points out that for Philo there are three places where immortal souls go: (a) to be among the angels, which is the place for all the immortal souls; (b) the intelligible world, among the ideas, where Isaac and Enoch went; (c) the presence of God, above the intelligible world, where Moses went.

5. QG III, 10; QG IV, 74.

> nature as men who travel abroad to see and learn. So when they have stayed awhile in their bodies and beheld through them all that sense and mortality has to show, they make their way back to the place from which they set out at the first. To them the heavenly region, where their citizenship lies, is their native land; the earthly region in which they became sojourners, is a foreign country. For surely when men found a colony, the land which receives them becomes their native land instead of their mother city, but to the traveller abroad the land which sent him forth is still the mother, to whom also he yearns to return. We shall not be surprised then to find Abraham, when he rose from the life of death and vanity saying to the guardians of the dead and stewards of mortality, "I am a stranger and sojourner with you."[1]

Abraham's relationship to Sarah, Hagar and Issac. It is perhaps in the treatment of Abraham's marriage to Sarah and the birth of Isaac that Philo develops most beyond the Biblical text of the Abraham stories. This is facilitated by the slight attention given to Isaac in Genesis. In Abraham's marriage it is quite clear that Philo considers Sarah the dominant and superior spouse with Abraham obedient to her. Sarah is described as paramount virtue, the very opposite of Potiphar's wife.[2] Philo refers to the opinions of some "natural philosophers" which he accepts in stating that this is a marriage between thoughts that seek purification and perfect virtue.[3] This is an unusual marriage in that the wife sows the seed and the husband receives the holy and divine sowings. Even though νοῦς is masculine and ἀρετή is

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1. *Conf*. 77-79.
2. *Leg*. All. III, 244.
3. *Abr*. 99-100.

feminine in form, "if anyone is willing to divest facts of the terms which obscure them and observe them in their nakedness in a clear light he will understand that virtue is male, since it causes movements and affects conditions and suggests noble conceptions of noble deeds and words, while thought is female, being moved and trained and helped and in general belonging to the passive categories, which passivity is its sole means of preservation.[1] Philo interprets Abraham's statement that Sarah is his sister from his father, but not from his mother, to mean that she is the motherless ruling principle of things, begotten of God the Father alone.[2]

Thus it is that Abraham, the inferior, must obey the perfect and wise Sarah.[3] Because of his need for lower instruction he obeys her injunction to mate (minds) with Hagar, who represents the training of the schools.[4] The mating takes place after ten years in Canaan after passing through Egypt (sense, the passion of childhood) and Canaan (vice, the age of adolescence).[5] This is a relationship of necessity for Abraham.[6] When there is trouble with Hagar, Abraham concludes that whatever is pleasing to Sarah will be good and profitable, even if it is not agreeable.[1] Sarah, however, does not condemn Abraham hastily in his relationship with Hagar, but does give him the benefit of the doubt in the crisis.[2] It is only, however, when Sarah's instructions are carried out and preliminary studies are cast out that the change of names for the patriarchal couple occurs.[3]

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[1] Abr. 101-102. See also Goodenough, By Light, Light, p. 139.

[2] Quis Her. 62.

[3] Congr. 63.

[4] Congr. 12, 122.

[5] Congr. 83, 85, 88, 121.

[6] Congr. 73.

The climax of this treatment of Sarah and Abraham is the birth of Isaac or Laughter (Joy). He is described as the laughter of the heart, a Son of God, who gives him as a means to soothe and cheer truly peaceful souls.[4] At certain points Philo seems to regard Abraham as the father of Isaac. He speaks of Isaac as the offspring of them both and of Abraham's rejoicing that he is to beget a son.[5] Even when the question is raised why Sarah is not said to bear to Abraham, in addition to pointing to the wonder and miracle of the birth, Philo says that it is so that the bearing might not be *so much* through union with a man as through the providence of God. And he says in the same passage that this is the literal meaning of the text.[1] At the same time Philo seizes upon certain texts which he uses to suggest a "virgin birth" of Isaac. He especially likes the statement in Genesis that "it had ceased to be with her (Sarah) after the manner of women," which he takes to refer to a transition from womanhood to virginity.[2] He speaks of a timeless birth arising from ~~a~~ God-inspired ecstasy (from the text, "She conceived and gave birth").[3] The birth is mysterious and she does not know how it occurs,[4] but it occurs after God visits her *in her solitude*.[5] He says at one point that scripture simply says that Sarah bears a son to Abraham, and not that Abraham begets.[6] She brings forth not to the author of her visitation, but to him who seeks wisdom, whose name is Abraham.[7] Abraham is made to say that the possession of virtue is not enough, but rather the exercise of it. This is possible only if God sends down the seeds from heaven to cause Sarah to become pregnant and to give birth to Isaac or Happiness.[1] The date of the birth, "in the other year," does not refer to temporal sequence, but to the realm of the incorporeal and intelligible.[2] Philo even interprets Genesis 21:7, "Sarah is suckling a child," to mean that she is receiving nourishment from Isaac and not vice-versa, since Isaac, being self-taught, is nourished by no one, but is a source of nourishment to others.[3]

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[1] Congr. 156.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Cher. 9. Philo apparently parallels this to Abraham's moving beyond Chaldean studies. Note that Hagar is said not to be really Abraham's wife, but is simply called such because the several school studies resemble and imitate true virtues, QG III, 21.

Unlike earlier Hellenistic Jewish writers, Philo shows little interest in the marriage of Keturah ("Incense Burning"). He says simply that the scriptures attribute the three best forms of senses to God (hearing, sight, smell), and Abraham judges it best to marry three wives, symbolically the three powers, the most admirable of senses, QG IV, 147.

[4] Mut. 131.

[5] Leg. All. III, 217-19. See also QG III, 56, which speaks of the miracle of the producing of children by people of their ages, when the element of ordinary events is removed and only the divine power and grace clearly appear.

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[1] *QG* III, 18.

[2] *Post*. 134; *Fug*. 167-168; *Cher*. 50; *Leg*. *All*. 217-19.

[3] *Fug*. 167-68.

[4] *Mig*. 139-42.

[5] *Cher*. 46 (ὁ θέος αὐτὴν μονωθεῖσαν ἐπισκοπεῖ).

[6] *QG* IV, 122.

[7] *Cher*. 40-41. See also *Mut*. 137-38, where he says that God's making laughter means that God begat Isaac since the two are synonymous and begetting is God's peculiar task.

Philo also speaks of Zipporah's being found pregnant "through no mortal agency," *Cher*. 47; and he also speaks of Hannah's receiving the divine seed and becoming pregnant, *Det*. 5.

At the same time he complicates the interpretation of these passages by saying that God begets and sows the seeds of *those goodly births* which are rendered to him (God) who gave them, *Mig*. 142.

It is interesting that Philo does not mind calling Abraham the father of Jacob since the two ways of achieving virtue which they represent are intimately connected.[4] He prefers, however, to minimize, if not actually eliminate, any real fatherhood of Abraham to Isaac on the allegorical level. In his discussion of Rebekah he distinguishes between two virginities, one of the body and one of the soul,[5] but the ambiguity of his presentation of Sarah's virginity makes it very difficult to determine whether in his mind she embodies both levels. It is, however, just such ambiguity of presentation without attempts at harmonization which makes these

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1. Det. 59-61.
2. Mut. 131.
3. Mig. 139-42.
4. Som. I, 166-70.
5. QG IV, 99.

passages exceedingly fruitful in a study of the Hellenistic provenance of the Christian birth narratives of Jesus. In this portion of the patriarchal narratives by Philo clear focus is upon Sarah and Isaac to the subordination of Abraham. Isaac clearly ranks highest, Sarah second (for she too must have a name change), and Abraham third, as one who is cared for and instructed by Sarah, who always knows what is best for him.

Philo regards the sacrifice of Isaac as the action which above all his other actions won God's favor[1] and says that anyone who is not malignant or a lover of evil must be overwhelmed with admiration for his extraordinary piety.[2] While this is the statement of Philo, his interest in Abraham is hardly concentrated on this act. He devotes far more attention to Abraham's marriage and the birth of Isaac than to his supreme act of piety. In describing the events of Genesis 22 Philo denies that Abraham was motivated by custom, love of honor, of fear,[3] and says that he is worthy of praise and love because of his special practice of obedience and love and because, since human sacrifice was unknown in Abraham's country, this act would have been introducing something new and against nature which no one could have brought his soul to do.[4] His loyalty was not divided, but rather his single concern was acceptability to God,[5] inasmuch as he was mastered by the love of God.[1]

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[1] Abr. 167.

[2] Abr. 199.

[3] Abr. 188.

[4] Abr. 192.

[5] Abr. 196, 198.

Abraham and Isaac journey together, indicating the reaching of the stage where labor and natural gifts, imitator and creator, have their differences wiped out;[2] and they walk with equal speed of mind.[3] The place which they see from afar is not identified with Moriah, but rather Philo speculates that place sometimes means God and sometimes a divine word and says that even one who has his place in the divine Logos never actually reaches him who is in very essence God.[4] Against both Hebrew text and Septuagint he describes Isaac carrying the fire for the sacrifice, so that the victim might bear the instruments of sacrifice, this being a light burden and not toilsome for the pious.[5] When Isaac raises the question concerning the victim Abraham does not swerve in body or mind but points to the providence of God and the possibility of all things to God. He does this where others would have had confusion, tearfulness, or silence.[6] He describes the bringing of Isaac to the altar as Abraham's rendering, as in duty bound, a fitting thank offering of the dearly beloved only trueborn offspring of the soul, the clearest image of self-earned wisdom. The binding of his feet

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1. Abr. 170.
2. Mig. 167.
3. Abr. 172.
4. Post. 17; Som. I, 65-67.
5. Abr. 171.
6. Abr. 174-75.

may mean either that, having once received God's inspiration, he judged it right to tread no more on the mortal, or because of his knowledge of God he knew the changeableness and inconstancy of creation.[1]

While Isaac was not actually sacrificed, Abraham's action was complete and perfect. God returned the gift which piety had rendered to him.[2] Philo regards the finding of the ram as an indication that God provides the third term in the relationship between the efficient cause (fire) and the passive object (wood). The fact that the ram was held fast indicates reason's keeping quiet and in suspense, being used by God.[3] The meaning of the story, of course, transcends the historical account. Philo interprets this as the sacrificing of the male progeny of the rich and fertile soul.[4] This represents, drawing upon the etymology of Isaac's name, the offering of man's joy to God. Isaac means "laughter," but "not the laughter which amusement arouses in the body, but the good emotion of the understanding that is joy," a reality closely associated with God and of which God alone partakes in perfect bliss.[5] It is certainly in this sense that Philo can regard this story as representing complete dedication and subjection to God.

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[1] Quod Deus 4.

[2] Abr. 177. See also Abr. 203.

[3] Fug. 132-136.

[4] Mig. 139-142.

[5] Abr. 201-202.

In Philo's interpretation of Abraham many of the emphases noted in other Jewish literature appear. Abraham becomes the model of piety (of course, as piety is defined in Hellenistic Judaism). He is the intercessor, the wise man, the first monotheist. There are several aspects to Philo's treatment of Abraham, however, which are of particular significance. He gives attention to the Abrahamic covenant, but in a sense universalizes it. It is true that historically Israel has a particular priestly role for humanity, but the covenant is God himself and this is known through the Torah, which is nothing more than a written account of the law of nature which is accessible to all men who seek wisdom. Indeed one can say, without exaggeration perhaps, that in a genuine sense for Philo any wise man is a son of the covenant. Abraham, therefore, is the standard of nobility for proselytes. Even the covenant sign of circumcision is not presented as something to distinguish a people in their particular relationship to God. Rather it is an eminently rational practice, defensible on rational grounds (even analogous in a way, he says, to the shaving of the body by Egyptian priests) in terms of hygiene and eugenics and symbolism. Certainly whatever peculiar relationship Israel was thought to have with God historically, given the presuppositions of Philo's thought, is absorbed into the larger relationship possible for every man who follows the natural Torah.

A second major feature of Philo's treatment of Abraham and the other patriarchs is his presentation of them as incarnate logoi. They are actual historical manifestations of men keeping the eternal natural law of God. Beyond this they become a means of grace for other men in what can be described as a Hellenistic version of the merits of the fathers. In this regard it is imperative to insist that one cannot make clear and distinct differentiation between the historical and the allegorical Abraham in Philo's writings.[1] If these men are incarnate logoi, this must mean precisely that they manifest historically, from Philo's point of view, the allegorical meaning which he assigns to the stories about them. Abraham's life symbolizes the soul's pilgrimage, but the historical Abraham made that pilgrimage. Because he did it he can become a means of grace in everyman's pilgrimage. This speaking on two levels makes the interpretation of individual passages problematic, it is true, but at the same time one is not forced to place his thoughts in completely separate categories. It is important to note again that his two levels of meaning are superimposed upon each other and do not exist side by side.

A third and very significant dimension in Philo's interpretation of Abraham is his clear subordination of Abraham to both Isaac and Sarah. Even the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham's supreme expression of piety, does not seem to hold for Philo an interest equal to that of the marriage of Abraham to Sarah or to the birth of Isaac, the Son of God. While the Old Testament authors have very slight interest in Isaac, and there is reason to suspect that the Isaac stories are often little more than repetition of Abraham episodes, for Philo he is the supreme patriarch of the triad, and outranked only by Moses in Philo's admiration. Whenever Abraham is compared with Isaac, the comparison is always to the glory of Isaac.

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[1] *Contra* the position of Samuel Sandmel, "Abraham in Normative and Hellenistic Jewish Traditions" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1949).

Josephus. The latest of the writings of Hellenistic Jews under consideration are those of Flavius Josephus. All of these were written in the period after the conclusion of the Jewish War of 66-70 A. D. These apologetic and propogandist writings make use of a number of Jewish, Greek, and Roman sources known either to Josephus or to his Greek literary assistants.[1] H. St. John Thackery indicates the writers' knowledge of rabbinic haggadah, targums, perhaps some of Philo of Alexandria, and the Septuagint among Jewish traditions.[2] The Jewish War, the first work of Josephus, was completed within the decade after the conclusion of the war.[3] In the reign of Domitian he completed his major work, Jewish Antiquities (or Archeology), in imitation of the Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (7 B. C.).[1] Later he wrote his Life (as an appendix to the Antiquities) and the treatise, Against Apion.[2]

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[1] J. Goldin, "Flavius Josephus," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (4 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 987. But against the theory of any substantial contribution by his assistants, see R. J. H. Shutt, Studies in Josephus (London: S. P. C. K., 1961), p. 33. The "assistant theory" is especially associated with the work of H. St. John Thackery. See his Josephus: The Man and the Historian (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1929), pp. 100-24.

[2] Thackery, pp. 78, 94.

[3] Ibid., pp. 34-35. The matter of the Slavonic edition of The Jewish War remains problematic. Thackery, pp. 33-34, takes the position that the Slavonic edition is an intermediate stage between the Aramaic (translated into Greek and then into Slavonic) and the extant Greek text. For the purpose of this study Slavonic Josephus hardly enters into consideration with

In the presentation of Abraham, which is centered primarily in the Antiquities, Josephus generally follows the narrative of the Old Testament, but from other sources and from the perspective of his own ideals, modifies the Biblical portrait in the direction of the Hellenistic heroic figure--intelligent, persuasive, virtuous. He describes him as "a man of ready intelligence on all matters, persuasive with his hearers, and not mistaken in his inferences" and with a "more lofty conception of virtue than the rest of mankind."[3] At his

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the exception of a single passage moralizing on divine providence as exemplified in the life of Abraham. "And indeed Abraham, the forefather of our race, was led out of his land, because he had offended his brother in the division of their territories; and whereby he sinned even thereby he received also his punishment. And again for his obedience He gave him the promised land." Josephus, ed. Thackery, and Ralph Marcus (8 vols.; "The Loeb Classical Library"; London: William Heinemann, Ltd. , 1926-43), III, 642. The editor describes this as an allusion to an otherwise unknown legend about Abraham depriving Haran of his fair share of the land and consequently losing his own. All citations are from the above edition of Josephus.

[1] Thackery, p. 56.

[2] Goldin, II, 988. In the Life and Against Apion there are no references to Abraham. Against Apion I. 71, does, however, mention the Chaldeans as the original ancestors of the Hebrews.

[3] Ant. I. 155.

death he is described as supreme in every virtue, thus receiving from God the due meed of honor for his zeal in his service.[1] For Josephus, however, virtue does not seem to be a specifically religious term, but rather has the meaning which it had in general for Hellenistic moralists.[2] Even when he speaks of the promise of land and posterity,[3] the covenant is not central; and the reason for circumcision is simply to keep Abraham's posterity from mixing with others.[4]

Josephus presents Abraham as the first monotheist, a position at which the patriarch arrives through rational processes, particularly through the observation of the irregularity of the movements of the celestial phenomena.[5] Because of his monotheism there was opposition to him in Mesopotamia so much so that he was driven out.[6] This was the context of his migration to Canaan.[7] Abraham's monotheism was, at the same time, an open-minded theology, since he remained ready to be convinced otherwise by superior reasoning. Josephus' Abraham is a tolerant man who goes down to Egypt during the famine willing either to be converted to Egyptian theology or to convert the Egyptian priests, whichever belief seemed superior.[1]

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[1] Ant. I. 256.

[2] Note, e. g., the mention of Lot as having learned hospitality from Abraham in Antiquities I. 200.

[3] Ant. I. 183-85; II. 269.

[4] Ant. I. 191-93.

[5] Ant. I. 155-60.

[6] Ant. I. 281. There is here some lack of consistency on the part of Josephus inasmuch as he says elsewhere (Ant. I. 152) that Terah left Ur because of hatred of the city where Haran died.

[7] Ant. I. 157. See also the statement of the Transjordan tribes to Phineas just before the death of Joshua that their altar does not imply idolatry which would be an innovation unworthy of Abraham's stock, Ant. V. 113.

Abraham combines in himself the traits of wise teacher, ruler, and valiant warrior. The sciences of arithmetic and astronomy which he had learned from the Chaldeans Abraham taught to the Egyptians, who in turn passed them on to the Greeks.[2] Josephus speaks of Abraham as reigning in Damascus.[3] He makes much of the defeat of the coalition of kings just before the meeting with Melchizedek. The latter's bread and wine constitute hospitable entertainment for Abraham's army.[4] He is cited again as warrior at the time of an appearance of God to the father of Moses. On this occasion God recalls the migration from Mesopotamia and the giving of posterity and lands, and then concludes: "Aye, and all that prowess that he displayed in war under my auspices ye would indeed be deemed impious not to hold in remembrance."[5]

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[1] Ant. I. 161.

[2] Ant. I. 166-68.

[3] Ant. I. 158-59. He quotes here certain Hellenistic sources and mentions (but does not quote) the so-called Pseudo-Hecataeus (ca. 200-150 B.C.), who is said to have written a book about Abraham (see Pfeiffer, History, p. 201). For the relationship of Pseudo-Hecataeus to Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 B.C.) see Josephus, Vol. IV, p. 79, note b. (The Loeb Classical Library). In Eusebius' Preparatio Evangelica, XIII. 13. 40, there is a line on monotheism said to be (but impossible) from Sophocles, taken from this Pseudo-Hecataeus' work on Abraham.

[4] Ant. I. 176-82.

[5] Ant. II. 214.

Josephus' interest in Abraham's piety is hardly central to his treatment. Even in those instances where he discusses the religious qualities of the patriarch's life, these qualities seem to be nothing more than examples of appropriate actions rationally thought through. In his discussion of the sacrifice of Isaac the interest is divided between Abraham and the twenty-five year old Isaac,[1] who had endeared himself to his parents by the practice of every virtue, "showing a devoted filial obedience and a zeal for the worship of God."[2] The place of the sacrifice is identified with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.[3] Abraham is tested in order that he may manifest his piety if he puts the doing of God's good pleasure even above the life of his child.[4] Abraham explains God's demand to Isaac and urges him to "bear this consecration valiantly."[5] He points out that God does not want Isaac to depart from this life in a common way (such as sickness or war), but amid prayer and sacrificial ceremonies. He then asks for Isaac's succor in his old age, by giving him God instead of himself.[6] The climax of the story for Josephus, however, is really Isaac's response as he receives the words with joy, saying that if he disobeyed he would be unworthy of

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1. Ant. I. 227, concerning Isaac's age.
2. Ant. I. 222.
3. Ant. I. 226; VI. 438.
4. Ant. I. 224.
5. Ant. I. 228-31.
6. Ibid.

having been born, and then rushes to the altar and his doom.[1]

In two other places there is some interest in Abraham's religious faith and practice, though this is slight. In the War, as part of Josephus' own speech appealing to the people of Jerusalem to surrender to the Romans during the siege of the city, he uses Abraham as an example of dependence upon God rather than military force. By a curious haggadah Josephus says that in the patriarch's time Pharaoh (anachronistically identified with Necho) invaded Palestine in order to abduct Sarah. Abraham, however, did not avenge with the sword or depend upon his three hundred eighteen officers, each commanding a boundless army, but rather "uplifting pure hands toward this spot which you have now polluted" enlisted God's aid.[2] This is hardly consistent with Josephus' concern elsewhere to present Abraham as valiant and victorious warrior. Finally Josephus presents Sarah as Abraham's niece, identifying her with Iscah of Genesis 11:29, rather than his sister or half-sister, so that thereby Abraham is presented as one who did not violate the marriage prohibitions of Leviticus 18:9 and 20:17.[3]

Josephus, following the earlier Hellenistic Jewish historians, is concerned to relate the Jews and the Greeks genealogically. He quotes from historian Malchos (discussed earlier) a genealogy of Abraham's sons through Keturah, one of whose daughters married Heracles.[1] Within this same concern he shows interest in the Spartan-Jewish relationships noted elsewhere. He refers to the letter from Areus to Onias.[2] Likewise he mentions the letter from the Maccabean Jonathan to Rome and Sparta, with reference to this earlier letter, saying that the Jews also knew of that kinship through their own writings.[3] Also a villain named Eurycles, a Lacedaemonian, was able to ingratiate himself ~~to~~ with Herod the Great, who showed him special honors "out of regard for his country."[4]

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[1] Ant. I. 232.

[2] War V. 380-81.

[3] Ant. I. 151. See Josephus, Vol. IV, p. 75, note c. Of some interest also is the amelioration of Sarah's character so that she cherishes Ishmael before Isaac is born, but then fears for Isaac after Abraham's death since Ishmael is the elder of the children (Ant. I. 215-19).

Thus Josephus' interest in Abraham is not primarily theological or religious. He is the father of Josephus' own people, a distinguished progenitor of a distinguished people, but one whose characteristics are tailored to the Hellenistic ideal. Abraham is secularized to the extent that this intelligent, persuasive, virtuous teacher, warrior, ruler never really goes beyond what is precisely appropriate for any hero worthy of emulation by a cultured Roman citizen or reader. Abraham becomes so commonplace in his thinking and practice that in Josephus' hands he loses all distinctiveness. Even the stark drama of Biblical treatment of the sacrifice of Isaac is so covered over with rationalizing of its appropriateness that in its retelling the original account loses all its power and dramatic quality. For Josephus Abraham is father of the people of Israel (of whom Josephus apparently regards himself a worthy exemplar in his own time), but his significance as the father of the faith of Israel and the prototype of the pious Israelite is small indeed.

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[1] Ant. I. 240-41.

[2] Ant. XII. 226. Josephus, however, mistakenly places the letter in the time of Onias III instead of Onias I. On this see Josephus, Vol. VIII, pp. 114-15, note c.

[3] Ant. XIII. 167.

[4] War I. 515.

The Hellenistic Jewish writers, with varying degrees of sophistication and success, attempt to do what other writers before them had also done, viz., an interpretation of Abraham in the light of the new realities of faith and existence. They attempt to relate the ancient tradition of Israel concerning him to the intellectual environment of the Hellenistic world of their time. Some do this through rather naive genealogical connections. Philo does this through a philosophical equation of the eternal Torah of Israel with the natural law. This natural law which is acknowledged by Abraham precedes both Mosaic legislation and Greek philosophy, and thus in him they are bound together. The end result of such an intellectual position is a rationalistic universalism in time and place with salvation achieved by all men who follow the natural law which coincides with Mosaic Torah. From this stance there is a lessening of interest in the covenant as an historical reality defining God's relationship to Abraham and to Israel in any peculiar way.

There is indeed within this literature a great concern to explain and rationalize. In some documents Abraham is constrained to explain to Isaac the reason for his intention to sacrifice his son. These explanations contrast sharply with the dramatic and overpowering silence of the Genesis narrative. The obedience of Abraham, shown in his migration from Ur and at other points in his life, is dictated by right reason or by Wisdom. Corollary to this obedience is the fact that in these documents the motif of reward for faithfulness overshadows any idea of unmerited grace to the patriarchs. It is significant, moreover, that one does find in Philo a Hellenistic version of the notion of the merits of the fathers, an idea associated almost exclusively with rabbinic thought.

While there is considerably less interest in the motif of "faithfulness when tested (a motif whose popularity elsewhere we have attributed to the Maccabean crisis), there is in most of this literature a sustained interest in Abraham's piety as example for the faithful. Particularly Philo's treatment of Abraham as sojourner and pilgrim is a model for all seekers of truth. His character is outlined in terms of the philosopher king, the warrior, the teacher, the spouse of Virtue, the incarnate law, but in all cases he is the hero to emulate.

One of the interesting developments in this literature is the increasing interest shown in Isaac. This is particularly true in Philo's writings, where Isaac is consistently ranked above Abraham. This interest in Isaac as religious hero, present in varying degrees of emphasis in this literature, is an important facet of the intellectual milieu of Hellenistic

Christianity which merits consideration in a later section of this study.

The Hellenistic Jewish writers attempt to be faithful to the two realities they accepted, the intellectual presuppositions of the Hellenistic world and the ancient faith of Israel. The degree to which each writer is successful in reconciling these "realities" is still a matter of scholarly debate. Certainly in each attempt the literal meaning of the Genesis narratives is modified at many points, but this is precisely what happened in the earlier existential refractions of tradition which we have considered. It must now be shown that this Hellenistic Jewish interpretation of the tradition was not an end product. This provides a framework for the thought of writers of Hellenistic Christianity who appropriated this living tradition. Aspects of this development will be explored in the final section of this study.

The Rabbinic Literature

Perhaps the most complicated tradition within Judaism for any historical source analysis is the rabbinic tradition found in the targums, talmuds, and midrashes. While this is usually discussed as a separate category of literature, it is now clear that certainly in the pre-Jamnia period rabbinic literature should include many of the apocalyptic works discussed already as apocrypha and pseudepigrapha.[1] Further even within the traditional framework of rabbinic literature the distinction between targum and midrash is often quite artificial.[2] Nevertheless the traditional classification does provide a relatively useful framework for analysis.

The Targums. One of the most important sources for the popular understanding of the Torah at the beginning of the Christian era is the collection of Aramaic targums related to synagogue worship and extant now in a number of recensions. Paul Kahle has indeed asserted that the study of the targums is more important for the understanding of pre-Christian Judaism than are the collections of Billerbeck and Bonsirven, which reflect largely a post-70 A. D. situation.[3] It is certainly clear now with the discovery of targums to Job and Leviticus at Qumran that there were written targums at the turn of the era.[4]

Before examining the treatment of the Abraham tradition in the targums, it is necessary to summarize briefly the relationships among the various Pentateuchal targums (targums to the Prophets and Writings not being included in this investigation). The most ancient targum now appears to be the Old Palestinian Targum.[1] It has been dated by Kahle as having been in circulation by the second century B. C.[2] It is extant in a number of fragments from the Cairo Geniza and in a fragment of the Joseph story in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.[3] There is secondly a tradition known as Jerusalem Targum II, represented by the Fragmentary Targum published by Moses Ginsburger in 1899 and a complete, but as yet unpublished, manuscript from the Vatican Library, Codex Neofiti I. The Codex Neofiti has been tentatively dated by its editor, Alejandro Macho, as second century A. D., but preserving on the whole a pre-Christian version.[4] These Palestinian targums are written in the colloquial Palestinian Aramaic rather than the official literary Aramaic of later rabbinic documents edited in Babylon.[5]

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[1] See W. D. Davies, "Apocalyptic and Pharisaism," *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 19-30.

[2] Note, e.g., the difficulty of determining precisely how to classify the Qumran Genesis Apocryphon.

[3] Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (2nd edition; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. 208.

[4] M. McNamara, "Targumic Studies," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1966), 13. Note also the reference at the end of some Septuagint manuscripts of Job to a Συριάκη βίβλος, which seems also to be a reference to a targum. (Eissfeldt, p. 696). The line between targums and such works as the Genesis Apocryphon or Pseudo-Philo, which come from an early period, is also very difficult to draw.

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[1] McNamara, 17. Renée Bloch, "Note sur l'utilisation des fragments de la Geniza du Caire pour l'etude du Targum Palestinien," Revue des Etudes Juives, n. s.,XIV (1955), 31. Kahle, Geniza, p. 208.

[2] Kahle, Geniza, p. 208.

[3] Concerning the latter fragment see Alejandro Diez Macho, "Neuvos Fragmentos del Targum Palestinense," Sefarad, XV (1955), 31-39.

[4] Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum: Its Antiquity and Relationship with the Other Targums," Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, (Congress Volume, Oxford, 1959; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), VII, 229, 236. The Neofiti I has a large number of variant readings in the margins and between lines which betray at least three different sources, according to Macho. For a description of the manuscript see Macho, "Una copia completa del Targum Palestinense al Pentateucho en la Biblioteca Vaticana," Sefarad, XVII (1957), 119-21.

[5] Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum," 245.

In his discussion of the Cairo fragments Kahle has suggested that these various Palestinian targums are a collection of midrashic material which the people of Palestine did not want to lose after the official Onkelos targum became authoritative in Palestine.[1] The fact of variations in readings in these documents simply supports the views of a number of scholars that the Palestinian Targum on the Pentateuch never had an official, uniform text.[2]

Alongside these targums is the Targum Babli or the Targum Onkelos on the Pentateuch. This targum, reaching its present form in the fifth century A. D. in Babylon and written in literary Aramaic, became in some sense the official targum text.[3] Macho, however, suggests that there was a proto-Onkelos at a very early date alongside the Septuagint and the Palestinian targums already mentioned.[4] Vermes likewise in an analysis of a pericope in Exodus suggests that all of these preserve (at least in the treatment of that pericope) exegesis common among Jews before the Bar Kochba revolt.[5] W. O. E. Oesterley and

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[1] Kahle, *Geniza*, p. 202. See also Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens*, ("Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament," Dritte Folge, Heft 14; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930), II, 12.

[2] Kahle, *Geniza*, p. 202. Malcolm C. Doubles, "Toward the Publication of the Extant Texts of the Palestinian Targum(s)," *Vetus Testamentum*, XV (1965), 26. Macho, "Una copia completa," 120.

[3] Eissfeldt, p. 697.

[4] Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum," 227.

[5] Vermes, "Baptism and Jewish Exegesis: New Light from Ancient Sources," *New Testament Studies*, IV (1957-1958), 318.

G. H. Box have likewise pointed out that the Palestinian dialect is often to be discerned in Onkelos.[1] In most cases, however, the Onkelos Targum is a fairly literal paraphrase vis-à-vis the more extensive midrashic elaborations of the other targums on the Pentateuch.

There is finally the so-called Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Jerusalem I), which quotes Onkelos directly at points and is quite extensive in its midrashic elaboration. While not reaching its present form until the seventh century A. D., in its language it often approximates Biblical Aramaic.[2] It has been suggested that this is a kind of revised Palestinian targum, revised in accordance with the official Onkelos Targum, but incorporating much older haggadah.[3] Kahle has noted that the official Onkelos Targum apparently did not for some time become authoritative in Palestine.[4] Thus the suggestion made by Macho, that where there is no cogent reason for assigning a text of Pseudo-Jonathan to a late date it can be assumed safely that this targum is as old as the other Palestinian targums, seems a valid one.[5] This is reinforced particularly when the targums parallel such early works as Jubilees and Pseudo-Philo.

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[1] W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, _A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Mediaeval Judaism_ (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), p. 51.

[2] _Ibid_., pp. 52-54.

[3] Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum," 239.

[4] Kahle, _Geniza_, p. 195.

[5] Macho, "The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum," 244. See also Macho, "Una copia de todo el Targum jerosolimitano en la Vaticana," _Estudios Biblicos_, XV (1956), 446-47. Such matters as the mention of Mohammed's daughters must, of course, be discounted.

Unfortunately a number of factors make impossible a definitive study of the targumic tradition. The most serious is the general inaccessibility of Codex Neofiti I, which has been made available in photostatic copies to only a very few scholars during this time while Macho is preparing his edition. A second major problem is the fragmentary nature of many targum sections. This is especially true in the Abraham stories. Also while it is certain that the midrashic elements in the targums underwent development, the relative age of each element within the whole Palestinian targum tradition remains problematic. The careful research of a few scholars on individual pericopes extant in most of the manuscripts has, however, reinforced the view of the relative antiquity of the Palestinian targums including the midrashic elements.[1] Thus it is possible to regard the theological emphases in these targums as generally representative of popular Palestinian piety in the historical period under consideration in this research. Because of the interrelationships of the various targums it seems best methodologically to approach the materials by Biblical pericope rather than by analysis of individual targum as a whole.[2]

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[1] See especially Vermes, Scripture and Tradition.

[2] For the Old Palestinian Targum the text used is that of Kahle in Masoreten des Westens, II. For the Fragmentary Targum (Jerusalem II) the text edition is Das Fragmententhargum (Thargum jeruschalmi zum Pentateuch), ed. Moses Ginsburger (Berlin: S. Calvary and Company, 1899). For Codex Neofiti I it is necessary to depend on the few citations made by Vermes in

The call of Abraham and the Egyptian sojourn. Pseudo-Jonathan has the midrash on Gen. 11:27 concerning Abraham's experience in the fiery furnace at the hand of the wicked Nimrod because of his refusal to worship his idol (his doubting brother Haran, however, being killed). Onkelos speaks of the "plain of Moreh" rather than the "oak," perhaps for theological reasons. In Neofiti the words of the promise are "in your justice all the families of the earth will be blessed."[1] Pseudo-Jonathan comments on Gen. 12:11 that Abraham then beheld Sarah's beauty for the first time because of the necessity of their undressing to cross the river.

The separation from Lot, the battle with the kings, and the Melchizedek episode. Both the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan relate the strife of the herdsmen to different types of instruction being given to them. In each case Abraham's

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Scripture and Tradition and by Macho in "Targum y Nuevo Testamento," *Mélanges Eugene Tisserant* ("Studi e Testi," 231; Citta de Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964), I, 153-85. For the Onkelos Targum the texts are *The Bible in Aramaic*, ed. Alexander Sperber (3 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), I, and the translation of J. W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch* (2 vols.; London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862-65). Etheridge, I, viii, indicates that he has followed the Aramaic text of Walton carefully collated with the last edition of the Wilna targums. Etheridge's translation of the Fragmentary Targum is used in this study only when corroborated by Ginsburger's Aramaic text or variants. Ginsburger generally follows Paris Codex 110, but gives variants from Vatican Codex 440 and Leipzig Codex 1. Macho ("Una copia completa," 120) indicates that Neofiti I differs from both the Vatican and Paris manuscripts, but that it coincides more with Vatican 440 than with Paris 110. For the readings in Pseudo-Jonathan dependence is made entire on the Etheridge translation in this study. In the analysis of the targums only those matters of some theological importance are noted.

[1] Macho, *Mélanges Tisserant*, I, 181 ("en tu justicia"). Cf. reading on Gen. 18:18, *ibid*.

instructions are superior. In the Fragmentary Targum Abraham had instructed his herdsmen to restrain his beasts, but Lot did not. In Pseudo-Jonathan Abraham had instructed his herdsmen not to go among Canaanites and Perizzites, but Lot did not. On Gen. 14:10 both of these targums understand both the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah to have fallen into the pits. Pseudo-Jonathan has further midrash which identifies Amraphel with Nimrod (now king of Pontus) and the messenger who tells of Lot's capture with Og, who had been spared from the giants who died in the flood. This messenger arrives on the eve of the Passover while Abraham is baking unleavened cakes. Further in this targum Abraham chooses Eliezer, son of Nimrod, who is equal in strength to all three hundred eighteen when the young men willed not to go with him. While both the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan identify Melchizedek with Shem, only the Fragmentary Targum describes him (with the Hebrew text tradition) as a priest of the Most High. Both Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan have "minister."[1]

The Gen. 15 covenant story. Both the Fragmentary Targum (Vatican manuscript 440 and Leipzig Codex 1; Ginsburger variant) and Pseudo-Jonathan speak of Yahweh as the one who brought Abraham out of the fiery furnace. In both of these and in Neofiti Abraham fears that although he has a reward in the present world, he has no part in the world to come. He is assured, however, that his good works are a reward for him in the world to come.[1] The reading of Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen. 15:6 is: "And he believed in the Lord and had faith in the Memra of the Lord and he reckoned it to him for righteousness, because he parlayed not before him with words." In the Fragmentary Targum, Neofiti, and Pseudo-Jonathan the sleep of Abraham becomes the occasion for an apocalyptic vision described in some detail. The birds in the vision are idolatrous nations who come against the sons of Israel, but the merits[2] of Abraham are a shield over them. From the words of Gen. 15:12b the kingdoms, according to the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan are Terror (Babylon); Darkness (Media); Greatness (Greece or Javan); Fall (Edom in Fragmentary Targum; Persia in Pseudo-Jonathan). In all three of the same targums Abraham sees Gehenna prepared for the wicked in the world to come. In the Fragmentary Targum and Neofiti he also sees thrones and seats set forth as in the Daniel apocalypse.[3] Pseudo-Jonathan reads further that the affliction of Abraham's descendents will come "because thou has not (italics mine) believed."

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[1] Onkelos: משמיש.

Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16). In the Fragmentary Targum Sarah provides a résumé of her piety:

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[1] For Neofiti reading see Macho, Mélanges Tisserant, I, 180-81.

[2] Thus Ginsburger, against Etheridge, who has "integrity." Pseudo-Jonathan has "righteousness."

[3] For Neofiti reading see Macho, Mélanges Tisserant, I, 179, 181.

> I left the house of my birth and the house of my father and came with thee in the faith of the Heavens. I have gone in with thee before kings, before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and before Abimelech, king of the Philistines; and I have said of thee, "He is my brother," so that they might not kill thee. And when I saw that I was not fruitful, I took Hagar the Egyptian, my handmaid, and gave her to thee to wife, and said, "She shall bring forth and I will bring up when she shall bear that I may be builded, be it only from her."[1]

A similar résumé is found in Pseudo-Jonathan along with a denunciation of Hagar. The Fragmentary Targum identifies Hagar as a descendent of those who cast Abraham in the fiery furnace. In Pseudo-Jonathan the connection is more explicit in that Hagar is the daughter of Pharaoh bar Nimrod! As a matter of propriety Pseudo-Jonathan has Hagar freed from slavery before marrying Abraham.

The Gen. 17 covenant story. Both Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan understand the command, "Walk before me," to mean "serve" or "worship."[2] The Vatican manuscript 440 and Leipzig codex of the Fragmentary Targum remove the laughter of Abraham (Hebrew: יצחק) at the announcement of the birth of a son. Here instead Abraham bows and is glad (שמחה) and wonders. This same modification is present in Onkelos which reads "rejoiced" (וחדי).

The visit of the angels (Gen. 18). Both the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan explain that Abraham was still recovering from the circumcision and explain the presence of three angels in terms of three missions: announcement of Isaac's birth, destruction of the cities, rescue of Lot. In both targums Ishmael is standing behind Sarah as she eavesdrops. In Pseudo-Jonathan Sarah denies wondering (the Hebrew has "laughing"). Onkelos renders the Hebrew of Gen. 18:14, "Is anything too hard (היפלא)?" as "What matter is hidden (היתכסא) before YHWH?"[1]

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[1] The Etheridge translation with slight modification on the basis of Sperber.

[2] Onkelos: פלח .

Birth of Isaac and expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar. Onkelos, the Fragmentary Targum and Psuedo-Jonathan all interpret Gen. 21:9 in a way derogatory to Ishmael. Pseudo-Jonathan has "mocking with a strange worship;" the Fragmentary Targum, "jesting" or "being obscene" (מגחך); Onkelos, "deriding" (מחאיך). In Pseudo-Jonathan Abraham tells Hagar to hearken to Sarah who is a prophetess, and he then sends Hagar away "with a letter of divorce"! Both the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan interpret Gen. 21:33 in terms of hospitality and proselytizing by Abraham at Beersheba.

The binding of Isaac (Gen. 22). On this crucial pericope there are readings available from all of the targums with the exception of the Old Palestinian of the Cairo Geniza. Because of the centrality of this passage to later discussion in this paper the readings are quoted in considerable detail here.

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[1] Also on Gen. 20:12 Sarah (contra the Masoretic Text) is identified as the daughter of Abraham's father's brother in Pseudo-Jonathan.

Gen. 22:8. Neofiti: And Abraham said, "A lamb for the burnt offering shall be prepared from before the Lord. You are the lamb of the burnt offering." And they went together with a perfect heart.[1]

Gen. 22:10. Neofiti: Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill Isaac his son. Isaac answered and said to Abraham his father, "Bind me properly that I may not kick (resist) you and your offering be made unfit and be cast into the pit of destruction in the world to come." The eyes of Abraham were turned to the eyes of Isaac, but the eyes of Isaac were turned to the angels of heaven, but Abraham did not see them. In that hour a heavenly voice went out and said (to each other?): "Let us go and see the only two in my world (?). The one slays and the other is being slain. The slayer does not hesitate and the one being slain stretches out his neck."[2]

Gen. 22:14. Neofiti: And Abraham worshipped and prayed to the Name of the Word of the Lord and said: "I pray: all is revealed before you. It is known before you that there was no division in my heart the first time when you told me to offer Isaac my son and to make him dust and ashes before you. But I departed immediately in the morning and did your word with joy and fulfilled your decree. Now when the children of Isaac come to a time of distress, you may remember on their behalf the binding of Isaac their father and listen to the voice of their prayer and answer them and deliver them from all distress so that the generations which follow may say: In the mountain of the Temple of the Lord Abraham offered Isaac his son and in this mountain - of the Temple - the glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was revealed to him."[3]

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[1] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 194. Fragmentary Targum is almost identical. See also Macho, Mélanges Tisserant, I, 159-60.

[2] Ibid., pp. 194-5. See also Macho, Mélanges Tisserant, I, 179. Fragmentary Targum is almost identical with the additional notice that Abraham spoke to the angel in the "language of the sanctuary," i.e., classical Hebrew. Etheridge and Vermes have "angel"; both Neofiti and Ginsburger have "voice."

[3] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 195. Fragmentary Targum is almost identical. See also R. le Déaut, "La presentation targumique du sacrifice d' Isaac et la soteriologie Paulinienne," Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus, 1961 (2 vols.; "Analecta Biblica," 17-18; Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963) II, 563-74.

On this pericope of the binding of Isaac Onkelos has two significant readings. The place of the sacrifice is not specifically identified with Moriah, but is simply "the land of worship" (ארע פלחנא). The reading on Gen. 22:14, however, is:

> And Abraham worshipped and prayed there in that place and said before the Lord, "Here shall generations worship: wherefore it shall be said in that day, 'In this mountain Abraham worshipped before the Lord.'"

The treatment of this story by Pseudo-Jonathan is considerably more elaborate in its midrash. The trial follows upon an argument between Isaac and Ishmael concerning their relative degrees of piety. Ishmael argues that he is the more righteous because Isaac was circumcised as an infant without a personal decision whereas he (Ishmael) was circumcised at the age of thirteen and could have resisted. Isaac replies: "Behold, now today I am thirty and six years old; and if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to require all my members I would not delay." These words are heard in the heavens and immediately the Word of the Lord tries Abraham, although in the context of this midrash the trial is obviously the trial of Isaac. Pseudo-Jonathan agrees with Onkelos in not naming Moriah. This targum further identifies the young men who accompany Abraham and Isaac as Ishmael and Eliezer and locates the altar at the same place where both Adam and Noah had built altars. With Neofiti and the Fragmentary Targum the reading here presents Isaac bidding his father to bind him properly lest the offering be profaned and he be cast into the pit. There follows here also the vision and the comment of the angels. Pseudo-Jonathan identifies the ram caught in the thicket as having been created "between the evenings of the foundation of the world." The prayer of Abraham that this event be remembered by God for the good of his descendents follows Neofiti and the Fragmentary Targum closely. The story then concludes in Pseudo-Jonathan with Sarah's death from shock after having been told by Satan that Abraham had killed Isaac.[1]

Two readings from Neofiti are explicitly related to the merits of the fathers. This is given as the reason for the multiplying of Isaac's sons (Gen. 26:26) and God's blessing of Laban (Gen. 30:27).[2] In the Neofiti Targum on Ex. 12:2 the Passover is related to both the birth and sacrifice (at age thirty-seven) of Isaac and reference made to Isaac's vision and the consequent weakening of his eyes.[1] Pseudo-Jonathan dates the covenant between the parts (Gen. 15), as well as Isaac's birth, on the fifteenth of Nisan, but does not place the binding of Isaac on that day. The Fragmentary Targum on Num. 23:9 (the Balaam speeches) reads: "I see this people who are led by the merit of their righteous fathers, who are like mountains, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and by the merits of their mothers, who are like hills, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah." Pseudo-Jonathan is almost identical with the exception of the naming of the mothers and fathers and with the addition, "Who can number the merits of these strong ones, or count the good works of one of the four camps of Israel?"

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[1] Other readings of lesser interest include:

a. On Gen. 24. The enrollment of Isaac in the Beth Midrash of Rabba Shem (Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan).

b. The identification of Keturah and Hagar (to exonerate Abraham?) on Gen. 25:1 (Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan).

c. On Gen. 25. Ishmael's repentance; Abraham's withholding a blessing from Isaac to prevent enmity between Isaac and Ishmael (Pseudo-Jonathan).

d. On Gen. 31:53. The plural verb form, ידינין, "the God of Abraham and the God of Nachor shall judge" (Onkelos and Old Palestinian Targum, Cairo Geniza).

e. On Gen. 35. "The Memra of the Lord has taught us to visit the afflicted from our father Abraham the righteous when he was revealed to him and gave the precept of circumcision" (Fragmentary Targum).

f. On Gen. 49. A scene of the twelve sons of Jacob gathered around his golden (sic) bed. He speaks of the fact that from Abraham came the profane Ishmael; from Isaac came the profane Esau; and he fears possible defection among his own sons. They reply by reciting the Shema' in unison (Fragmentary Targum).

[2] In the former, for Abraham's merits; in the latter, for Jacob's. Macho, Mélanges Tisserant, I, 182.

One of the most significant sections found in the targum readings is the treatment of Lev. 22 (directions concerning acceptable animals for sacrifice), a reading found in almost identical words in the Old Palestinian Targum from the Cairo Geniza and the Fragmentary Targum. The translation of the Fragmentary Targum reads:

> In the time when you remind us (of) the order of sacrifices which are to be offered year by year, these sacrifices are a covering for you upon our sins. And when there is a cause of our sins and we lack what is offered from flocks of sheep, a bull is to be chosen before me to recall the Elder from the east who offered to your name a bullock and he ran to the cattle and rounded up a bullock fat and good and gave it to the chief (servant), and the chief

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[1] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, pp. 216-17. Etheridge and Vermes also give this as a reading of the Fragmentary Targum, but this is not found in the Ginsburger edition. See also le Déaut, "De nocte Paschatis," Verbum Domini, XLI (1963), 189-95. The weakened eyes apparently explain Gen. 27:1.

> hastened to serve it and baked cakes and caused the angels to eat; and he was counted worthy of the good news that Sarah would bear Isaac. A lamb is to be chosen, secondly, to remember the merit of Isaac, who bound his body on the top of the altar and stretched out his neck for your Name's sake. The heavens came low and descended, and Isaac saw their perfection and his eyes were dimmed from the high places, on account of which he acquired merit and there was provided there a lamb in his stead for a burnt offering. Again a goat is to be chosen, thirdly, to remember the merit of dread one, Jacob, who wore a covering of goats and served boiled things and brought to his father from the boiled things and caused him to drink wine; and he was worthy to receive the order of blessings from his father Isaac to raise up twelve holy tribes to your name.[1]

A marginal reading in Codex Neofiti has:

> After this (viz., the birth of Isaac) the lamb was chosen to recall the merit of the one man who was bound upon a mountain as a lamb for a burnt offering upon the altar. God delivered him in his merciful goodness, and when his (Isaac's) children pray in the time of their distress and say, as they are obliged to say, "Answer us and listen to the cry of our prayer," He agreed to remember on our behalf the binding of Isaac our father.[2]

In these readings there appears to be a continuation of the process which much earlier historicized the meaning of the Canaanite agricultural festivals which the Israelites assimilated. Not only are other events assimilated to the meaning of Passover, but the categories of sacrificial animals in general are given historical foundations by being associated with events in Israel's past.

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[1] My translation. The primary difference in the Old Palestinian Targum of the Cairo Geniza is the description of Abraham as פטיר ; Isaac as ישׁירא ; and Jacob as תמימה .

[2] Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 211.

There is one final targum reading of significance which is found both in the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan on Lev. 26:42. This speaks of God's remembering the covenant with Jacob at Bethel, with Isaac at Mount Moriah, and with Abraham between the divided portions. Beyond the simple systematizing indicated here, the important fact is that now Gen. 22 has here become the covenant with Isaac.

The Mishnah, the Talmuds, the Midrashes and Other Literature. In addition to the targums there is a considerable amount of rabbinic tradition contained in the various midrashes, the Mishnah, the Tosephta, the talmuds, and liturgical works. The very form in which this kind of traditional material is transmitted, however, makes certainty and comprehensiveness in treatment of a particular limited historical period of rabbinic thought almost impossible. It is not always possible to determine whether a citation is actually an historical saying by a particular rabbi or is simply a remark attributed to him. Further in many cases it is impossible to identify with any degree of certainty a rabbi who is cited by name. As Judah Slotki says:

> Rabbinical chronology in the Talmud offers numerous and almost insurmountable difficulties. No dates are given and it is, therefore, with few exceptions, impossible to give anything more precise than the century in which the sage lived and died. The confusion is intensified by the fact that more than one Rabbi bears the same name, sometime in the Tannaitic period and sometime in the Amoraic; sometime in Palestine and sometime in Babylon. When two contemporary

> Rabbis with the same name live, the one in Babylon and the other in Palestine, the bewilderment is complete.[1]

It has been a major weakness of much study of this rabbinic tradition that statements were made concerning "rabbinic tradition" on the basis of citations representing situations almost half a millenium apart. This point of view assumed a certain static quality in rabbinic thought. Recently, however, a few scholars have applied rigid historical criticism to rabbinic material. This is the position of the present investigation of the Abraham tradition. The major thesis of this paper is that the Abraham tradition received modification at various periods in Jewish and Christian experience which reflected responses to historical-theological crises and community needs and practices. It has already been shown that this was the case in the period surrounding the Maccabean revolt. With the number of references to Rome (often veiled as Edom) and what seem to be statements made vis-à-vis the presence of the Christian sect (e.g., the concern among certain first-century rabbis against those whose teaching does not follow _halakah_ and who overthrow the covenant of circumcision), the assumption can legitimately be made that theology would continue to be influenced by history. Certainly the complete cessation of sacrificial cult after the

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[1] Judah Slotki, _Index Volume_, _The Soncino Talmud_ ed. Isidore Epstein (35 vols.; London: The Soncino Press, 1952), p. 621. This concise statement of the problem needs to be supplemented, however, with the observation that the names of rabbis are not spelled with consistency in the various standard modern studies. Further the divisions of rabbis into generations, etc., is not consistent.

Bar Kochba War and prohibition of access to Jerusalem (even granting the possibility of some cult on the ruins of Herod's Temple between 70-135 A.D.),[1] the Hadrianic persecutions, the fact of two devastating wars within little more than half a century, the growth and eventual imperial recognition of Christianity are all historical realities which the rabbis could scarcely ignore. Given the proof that before this time Israel's theology responded to historical crises with new emphases, one cannot simply quote indiscriminately from a Babylonian Amora of the fifth century alongside a Tannaitic rabbi of the first century nor can one uncritically use materials codified in the late medieval period without indication of source as representative of the point of view of Judaism of the first century. This particular study seeks to cite only traditions which can with some degree of certainty be dated within the period under investigation in this thesis. This methodology, of course, makes possible the failure to cite some anonymous traditions which appear in late materials and may actually be early, but at the same time through its rigid reductionism it guards against complete lack of historical discrimination, which is the general pattern of some scholarship on these works.[2]

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[1] See especially Kenneth W. Clark, "Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after A. D. 70," *New Testament Studies*, VI (1959-60), 269-80. Also Benjamin W. Helfgott, *The Doctrine of Election in Tannaitic Literature* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1954), p. 87.

[2] If one simply follows the traditional approach to rabbinic theology, he might equally well cite Origen alongside St. Paul as representing "Christian theology."

The entire scope of rabbinic literature has not been investigated in this study. The attempt has been made, however, to understand rabbinic literature in its own integrity and not simply as background for study of the New Testament. The works investigated and cited include the Mishnah, Babylonian Talmud, Jerusalem Talmud, Tosephta, Mekilta on Exodus, Sifra on Leviticus, Sifre on Numbers and Deuteronomy, the Midrash Rabbah, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, and the Standard Prayer Book.[1]

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[1] The following editions of this rabbinic literature have been utilized: *The Mishnah*, ed. Herbert Danby (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933). For the tractate Aboth, the Hebrew text and translation in *Pirke Aboth*, ed. R. Travers Herford (New York: Schocken Books, 1962). *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. Isidore Epstein (35 vols.; London: The Soncino Press, 1935-52). *Le Talmud de Jérusalem*, tr. Moïse Schwab (6 vols.; Paris: Editions G. P. Maisonneuve, 1960). *Tosephta*, ed. M. S. Zuckermandel (2nd Hebrew edition; Jerusalem: Bamberger and Wahrmann, Publishers, 1937). *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, ed. Jacob Z. Lauterbach (3 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933-35). *Sifre zu Numeri*, ed. Karl George Kuhn ("Tannaitische Midraschim"; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1959). *Midrash Sifre on Numbers*, ed. Paul P. Levertoff (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1926). *Sifre zu Deuteronomium*, ed. Henrik Ljungman ("Tannaitische Midraschim"; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1964). Only Lieferung 1 on Deut. 1:1-6:4 was available in the Ljungman edition. *Sifre zu Deuteronomium*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1922). *Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon (10 vols.; London: The Soncino Press, 1939). *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, ed. Gerald Friedlander (New York: Hermon Press, 1965). *The Standard Prayer Book*, ed. S. Singer (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1944). For *Sifra on Leviticus* all citations are from *Textes rabbiniques de deux premiers siècles chrétiens*, ed. Joseph Bonsirven (Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1955). Analysis of the *Midrash on Psalms*, *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, and *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* yielded no citations from the period under consideration. In the analysis which follows, all references to primary sources are to these editions. Talmud references are cited by tractate, with Babylonian and Jerusalem editions indicated by b. or j. before the title of the tractate. When more than one edition of a midrash is used, the editor's name is given in each case.

The only rabbis cited are those who taught in the period ending with the Bar Kochba War.[1] In the Tannaitic Midrash (Mekilta, Sifra, Sifre), the Mishnah, and Tosephta, however, general Tannaitic traditions are cited,and only those citations from rabbis who definitely taught in the post-140 A.D. period are excluded. Likewise baraithas which are introduced with the usual formulas are included. Other undated rabbinic opinion is excluded.

No attempt is made here to distinguish between comment in documents organized along formal midrash lines and those which follow the mishnah-type organization. Often the same rabbinic opinion is in both. Most of the opinion cited, however, does fall into the general category of haggadah and fits what A. G. Wright has described as the two basic types of rabbinic midrashic comment: creative historiography and creative philology. It follows also the principles which Wright has discerned, *viz*., that one must interpret all the details in scripture and that all parts of the Bible (letters, words, verses, sections) must be explained not only as a continuity in relation to the context, but also as autonomous units.[2]

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[1] This is the period which ends the third generation of Tannaim in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 694-708. The dates and symbols used in this study are those of Montefiore and Loewe except in rare cases where the name or date is found only in Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (5th ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (4 Aufl.; 6 vols.; München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1965), or the Talmud Index Volume. T1= 10-80 A.D.; T2= 80-120 A. D.; T3= 120-140 A.D. (Montefiore and Loewe, p. 696).

[2] Addison G. Wright, "The Literary Genre Midrash," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1966), 129-30.

In this rabbinic literature under consideration the major interest of the rabbis lies in three areas: the covenant with Abraham (circumcision, its meaning and value); the life, character, and example of Abraham; and the merits of the fathers. Some motifs noticed at an earlier period, e. g., the interest in grace which dominated the minds of the Priestly writers, are conspicuous by their almost complete absence. Other motifs are present here, but to a lesser extent than the three major ones. Our consideration will summarize the secondary motifs and then turn to the three major concerns of the rabbis.

The God of the Fathers; the promise to Abraham. Only a few references are made to the unilateral promise to the fathers. Both Sifre on Deuteronomy and R. Eleazer b. Azariah (T3) say that the Exodus occurred only because of the promise to the fathers.[1] Mekilta insists that the formula, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, designates no order of importance (since the order is reversed in Lev. 26:42.[2] The first benediction in the Shemoneh ʿEsreh, dated as pre-Maccabean by F. C. Grant, addresses God as "Our Shield and the Shield of our Fathers! Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the Shield of Abraham!"[3]

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[1] Sifre on Deut. 1:11, Ljungman, p. 28. Mekilta, I,220.

[2] Mekilta, I, 2-3. At another place, however, Mekilta is conscious that Isaac alone among the patriarchs did not have his name changed. This does not seem to have any decisive theological significance (as it does, e.g., for Philo), and it is noted that Solomon and Josiah (and some say also Ishmael among the heathen) were also given their names directly by God (Mekilta, I, 133-34).

[3] F. C. Grant, *Ancient Judaism and the New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 45. See also Israel Abrahams, *A Companion to the Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (Revised ed.; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1922), pp. iii, lv-lix.

The children of Abraham. The Mishnah has two references which extend sonship from Abraham to every Israelite. Rabbi Akiba (T3) said: "Even the poorest in Israel are looked upon as free men who have lost their possession, for they are sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[1] A saying of R. Johanan b. Matthias (T;ca.130) to his son concerning feeding laborers is: "My son, even if thou preparest them a banquet like Solomon's in his time, thou wilt not have fulfilled thy duty toward them, for they are sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."[2] The Tosephta at one point interprets the change of name to Abraham to indicate that Abraham is the father of all who come into the world.[3] There is another Mishnah reference which contrasts the children of Abraham and Balaam (Christians ?). The children of Abraham are those with a good eye, lowly spirit and a humble mind.[4]

Abraham as Priest and King. According to R. Joshua (T2), there were two occasions on which Moses compared himself to Abraham and God answered him, "Glorify not thyself in the presence of the king and stand not in the place of great men."[5]

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[1] Mishnah, Baba Kama 8:6.

[2] Mishnah, Baba Mezi'a 7:1. The above dating from Strack-Billerbeck.

[3] Tosephta, Berakoth 1:13.

[4] Mishnah, Aboth 5:19. See also the discussion in Strack-Billerbeck, III, 211, on the conditions under which proselytes were permitted to call Abraham father.

[5] Genesis Rabbah, p. 486. This is a significant comment in comparison with the understanding of the relative importance of the two men in Pauline thought.

Further there are statements from both R. Ishmael (T3) and R. Akiba (T3) of Abraham's high priesthood. Akiba reasoned that the only place where Abraham could circumcise himself and still be whole (as a priest) was the *'orlah* of the body.[1] Ishmael simply identifies Abraham as a high priest in one place, but elsewhere a statement made on his authority elaborates with reference to Gen. 14 and Ps. 110. It is said that God intended to bring forth the priesthood from Shem (=Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God). However, because he gave precedence in his blessing to Abraham and not to God, Abraham rebuked him and immediately the priesthood was given to Abraham. Thus in Ps. 110:1 the address to "my Lord" refers to Abraham, and "after the order of Melchizedek" is taken to mean that Melchizedek was a priest, but not his posterity, since the priesthood passed to Abraham.[2]

The fiery furnace tradition. Only one reference is found to this haggadah. R. Eliezer b. Jacob (T2) said that while God was still at his table in the firmament, Michael, the great prince, had already descended and delivered Abraham from the fiery furnace. Other rabbis, however, say that God descended and delivered him.[3]

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[1] Genesis Rabbah, p. 392.

[2] The identification is made in Genesis Rabbah, p. 392. The elaboration is in b. Nedarim, ch. III, pp. 98-99.

[3] Midrash Song of Songs, p. 78. There is another reference to the deliverance from Ur (but not from a furnace) in a saying of R. Eliezer (T2) that each of the five letters of the Torah which alone have double shape all pertain to redemption. With כ Abraham was redeemed from Ur of the Chaldees (on the basis of Gen. 12:1). (Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, pp. 383-84). (This work is cited hereafter as PRE).

Abraham's apocalyptic vision. Disagreement between R. Johanan ben Zakkai (T1) and R. Akiba (T3) is remembered concerning the interpretation of Gen. 15:18. The one maintained that God revealed to Abraham this world, but not the next; the other maintained that he revealed to him both worlds.[1] R. Eliezer (T2) interprets the covenant animal pieces as four kingdoms.[2] There is also a talmudic baraitha to the effect that God gave a foretaste of the future world to three persons while still in this world.[3]

The Abraham tradition and the liturgical calendar. The tradition associating the three patriarchs and the three statutory prayers (Abraham instituting the morning prayer; Isaac, the afternoon prayer; and Jacob, the evening prayer) is found under the rubric of "so taught our teachers" in the Tanhuma Midrash.[4] The tradition relating the morning sacrifice hour to Abraham is found also in the Jerusalem Talmud in a citation from R. Ishmael (T3) among other rabbis.[5]

Of more significance theologically is the tradition found both in talmud and the midrash citations which dates the birth of Isaac on the Passover. In a calendar disagreement between R. Joshua (T2) and R. Eliezer (T)[1] on some questions they both agree in dating Isaac's birth and the future redemption of the world in Nisan.[2] Mekilta is even more explicit in linking matters of Heilsgeschichte to the fifteenth of Nisan. Then God spoke to Abraham at the covenant between the parts; then Isaac's birth was announced; then Isaac was born; and then the future redemption (i.e., the Exodus) was predicted to take place on this day.[3] Finally there is the tradition associated with Rabban Gamaliel's name (T2). In his interpretation of Gen. 17:22 ("the selfsame day"), he says that Abraham sent for Shem who circumcised him and Ishmael. On the basis of the use of the same phrase ("the selfsame day") in Lev. 23:28 he takes the date of the circumcision of Abraham to be the Day of Atonement and the place as the temple site with forgiveness to future generations when God sees the blood of Abraham's circumcision.[4]

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[1] Genesis Rabbah, p. 376.

[2] PRE, pp. 198-99. The identification of the fourth with the "sons of Ishmael" (Islam) certainly indicates late redaction, but may rest upon an earlier form of the saying in which Media and Persia were not understood as being symbolized by a single animal.

[3] b. Baba Bathra, ch. I, pp. 85-86. The references must be to Gen. 15 (Abraham), Gen. 22 (Isaac) and Gen. 28 (Jacob), all understood apocalyptically.

[4] Montefiore and Loewe, p. 355 (#948).

[5] j. Berakoth, ch. IV (Vol. I, p. 72).

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[1] The Talmud Index simply identifies him as Tannaitic, first to second centuries, and does not identify him specifically with Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (T2). There is, however, no reason not to make this identification particularly in light of the many places where he figures as the opponent and contemporary of R. Joshua.

[2] b. Rosh Hashanah, ch. I, p. 39. Eliezer has the births of the other patriarchs in Tishri; Joshua has them in Nisan. Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, p. 215, erroneously says that at this place the difference of opinion included also the dating of the sacrifice of Isaac.

[3] Mekilta, I, 112-13.

[4] PRE, pp. 203-4.

Abraham's life, character, and example. The presentation of Abraham as a model of good character to be emulated by his descendents, a motif noticed in other types of Jewish tradition already, is seen also in rabbinic literature. Those qualities of good character which are most meaningful to the rabbis are said to have been demonstrated by Abraham--even to such matters as table manners. There is, however, significantly also a witness by some rabbis to Abraham's lack of faith and his inferiority especially in comparisons with Jacob.

First of all there are traditions which speak of Abraham's exemplary character in a general way. In a baraitha in the Babylonian Talmud he is one of three who were given a foretaste of the future world while still in this world and one of three over whom the evil yetzer had no dominion (the other two being Isaac and Jacob). He is one of six over whom the Angel of Death had no dominion (the others being Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam) and one of seven over whom the worms had no dominion (the seventh being either Benjamin or David.)[1] In another baraitha he is one of the five possessions of the Holy One (in addition to Torah, Sanctuary, Heaven and Earth, and Israel).[2]

Mekilta speaks of Abraham's love to God and his complete obedience, interpreting the phrase, "of them that love me and keep my commandments" in the Decalogue as referring to Abraham and those like him.[1] This same midrash indicates that the patriarch's name was changed from Abram to Abraham when he performed good deeds (as was also the case with Sarai and Jethro).[2] The Mishnah refers to the ten trials which Abraham had and made known how great was his love.[3] Indeed all the generations from Noah to Abraham provoked God until Abraham came and received the reward of them all.[4] In commenting on Jer. 12:5 R. Judah b. Bathyra (T3) is quoted as pointing to the patriarch's eager and enthusiastic obedience: "If thou art astonished at the reward wherewith I requited that wicked man who ran four steps in my honor, how much more when I give their due reward to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who ran before me like horses."[5]

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[1] b. Baba Bathra, ch. I, pp. 85-86.

[2] b. Aboth, ch. VI, pp. 89-90 (from a chapter of baraithas not found in Rabbi's Mishnah).

There is a reference to the widespread tradition noted in other works concerning Abraham's astrological wisdom. This saying, indicating that Abraham was much sought after by potentates of east and west, is attributed to R. Eleazer of Modi'im (T2).[6] He is presented also as a man of extraordinary sensitivity and foresight in human relations, e.g., electing not to bless Isaac since Ishmael would have wanted a blessing also,[7] and not reprimanding Abimelech until shortly before his death in order not to shame him in a subsequent meeting.[1] The fairness of Abraham in promising Abimelech not to deal falsely with him, his son, or grandson, resulted in the Exodus not going through the land of the Philistines, since the grandson was still alive.[2] The statement in Num. 12:3 that Moses was the meekest man on earth is taken by Sifre on Numbers to exclude the patriarch Abraham whose meekness Moses did not exceed (though R. Jose, T4, excludes only the ministering angels in this comparison).[3] Further he is an example of kindness. R. Simeon (T4) said in the name of R. Eliezer (T2?): "Who was it that showed kindness to those who did not need it? Abraham to the angels."[4] This particular narrative becomes a precedent for sitting in the presence of a great man while that man is standing. The question arose concerning a banquet given by R. Gamaliel (T2). In a tradition attributed to R. Joshua (T2) in Mekilta, but to R. Eliezer (T2?) in the Talmud and Sifre on Deuteronomy, the rabbi says:

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[1] Mekilta, II, 247 (on Ex. 20:6).

[2] Mekilta, II, 164-65.

[3] Mishnah, Aboth 5:4.

[4] Mishnah, Aboth 5:3.

[5] b. Sanhedrin, ch. XI, p. 648.

[6] b. Baba Bathra, ch. I, pp. 83-84. Tosephta, Kiddushin 5:17.

[7] Numbers Rabbah, p. 418. The saying is attributed to R. Eliezer (without further identification; but this may be Eliezer b. Hyrcanus).

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[1] Sifre on Dt. 1:3. Ljungman, pp. 14-15. Others with the same sensitivity include Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Isaac.

[2] Mekilta, I, 170 (on Ex. 13:17).

[3] Sifre on Numbers. Levertoff, pp. 81-82. Kuhn, p. 265.

[4] Leviticus Rabbah, p. 432.

> Leave him (i.e., Gamaliel) alone, let him do the serving We find that one greater than R. Gamaliel waited upon people . . . It was our father Abraham, who waited upon the angels. And he believed them to be human beings, Arabs, worshippers of idols. All the more is it proper that R. Gamaliel should wait upon wise men, sons of the Torah.[1]

In other areas Abraham is said by R. Joshua (T2) to have been the first to give a tithe.[2] A baraitha also relates the story of Abraham to divorce laws, his waiting before being given Hagar being the precedent for a ten-year limit to the possibility of childbearing before divorcing a woman.[3] Finally Abraham is an example in his proselytizing concerns. The word, "soul," in the Shema' (Dt. 6:5) is related by rabbis to Gen. 12:5 ("the souls which you have made in Haran") and understood to mean that Abraham made proselytes and brought them under the wings of the Shekinah.[4] There is a similar tradition which states that it was for the sake of possible proselytes that Abraham was not circumcised until he was ninety-nine years old. Had he been circumcised earlier, only those whose age he had not exceeded would have become proselytes. Thus he did not close the door to any future proselytes.[5]

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[1] Mekilta, II, 177-78. b. Kiddushin, ch. I, p. 158. Sifre on Deuteronomy (Kittel), pp. 77-78. The Talmud Index cites this Eliezer only as a Tanna of the first and second centuries.

[2] PRE, p. 195.

[3] b. Yebamoth, ch. VI, p. 428. Cf. Tobit.

[4] Sifre on Deuteronomy (Kittel), pp. 54-55.

[5] Mekilta, III, 140.

Alongside these traditions which speak of Abraham only in positive terms, there are a few traditions which assess the Genesis narratives more critically. Johanan b. Zakkai (T1) explains the meaning of Gen. 15:18, when Abraham asks God how he will know that he will inherit, since he has been promised seed, but given none, by having God say:

> Abram! The entire world stands at my word and thou dost not believe in my word, but thou sayest, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" By thy life! In two ways shalt thou surely know, as it is said, "And he said to Abram, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land which is not theirs, and they shall afflict them.'"[1]

According to R. Eleazer b. Arak (T2, Strack's dating) this unbelief is even worse since Abraham already had seed when God said this to him.[2] There is also a baraitha which indicts Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for lack of proselytizing interest. Lotan (Gen. 36:22) wanted to become a proselyte, but was repulsed by the patriarchs. She became a concubine to Esau's son and from her descended the Amalekites who afflicted Israel because of the action of the fathers.[3]

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[1] PRE, pp. 374-76.

[2] Dating is from Strack, Introduction. Ibid. It should be noticed, however, that there is another tradition where R. Johanan b. Zakkai says that the time of servitude was reduced because of the merits of the fathers (PRE, p. 376). Another tradition in a R. Eleazar's name (cited only as Tannaitic in Talmud Index) says that Abraham was punished and his children doomed to Egyptian servitude for two hundred ten years because Abraham pressed scholars into his service (on the basis of Gen. 14:14: "He armed his dedicated servants, born in his own house"). b. Nedarim, ch. III, p. 97.

[3] b. Sanhedrin, ch. XI, p. 678.

Even within the patriarchal family Abraham is inferior to Jacob in a few places. Is. 2:3 makes reference to the house of the God of Jacob (rather than of Abraham or Isaac) because Jacob called God home (Bethel in Gen. 28:19 interpreted as "God is a home"). Isaac related worship only to a field (Gen. 24:63) and Abraham, only to a mountain (Gen. 22:14).[1] Also it is said elsewhere that Shema' mentions Israel (not Abraham or Isaac) because Abraham fathered Ishmael and Isaac fathered Esau, but Jacob fathered twelve sons (according to this interpretation even Reuben having repented and fasted all his life long).[2]

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[1] b. Pesahim, ch. VIII, p. 465, by R. Eleazar (cited only as Tannaitic in Talmud Index).

[2] Sifre on Deuteronomy (Ljungman), pp. 78-80. Other traditions of some interest and in part parallel to traditions noted elsewhere include:

a. A baraitha which states that there have been four women of surpassing beauty in the world: Sarah, Rahab, Abigail, and Esther. b. Megillah, ch. I, p. 87.

b. A baraitha that until Abraham there was no old age (i.e., old age did not mark a person), but Abraham prayed that there should be old age (in Gen. 24:1 he is the first person of whom the description of "old man" is used). b. Sanhedrin, ch. XI, p. 737.

c. R. Eleazar b. Azariah (T3) identifies Elihu in the book of Job with Isaac. Son of Baracheel = the son God blessed (Gen. 26:12). He is called a Buzite because he despised all the emplacements of idolatry. R. Akiba (T3) identifies Elihu with Balaam. j. Sotah, ch. V (Vol. VII, pp. 288-90).

d. A statement attributed to R. Halafta (T2): "Everything which the Holy One, blessed be He, will do or renew in his world in the Messianic future, he has already done in the past through the medium of a prophet in this world." Among the references cited are: "I am He who will remember the barren as I have already done through Abraham, as it is stated, 'And the Lord remembered Sarah as He had said.'" Midrash Qoheleth, pp. 98-99.

The Abrahamic covenant. During this period there is significant interest in the Abrahamic covenant. This interest has two foci: (1) the importance of circumcision along with the seriousness of the disobedience which neglects or refuses to circumcise; and (2) the sacrificial significance of circumcision and its attendant merit. It is, of course, quite possible that some of the thought and language concerning circumcision reflects awareness of and hostility to the Christian position represented by the Pauline and Hellenistic Christian tradition.

Concerning the intrinsic importance of circumcision there are a number of rabbinic statements. R. Ishmael (T3) comments on the greatness of circumcision and indicates that the multiple occurrence of the term, "covenant," in Gen. 17 shows this.[1] It is recognized by Sifra,[2] R. Akiba (T3),[3] R. Jose the Galilean (T3),[4] R. Eliezer (T)[5], and R. Eleazar b. Perata

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e. Tradition of Sarah's fear for Isaac because of Ishmael's idolatry and murderous intent. Tosephta, Sotah 5:12 and 6:6.

f. Johanan b. Zakkai explains the choice of Babylon for the Jewish exiles because it was the land of Abraham, and his children would feel more comfortable there than in any other place. Tosephta, Baba Kamma 7:3.

[1] Mishnah, Nedarim 3:11. See also Mekilta, II, 169-70.

[2] Sifra on Lev. 12:3. The reason here is that the person may die on the Sabbath uncircumcised. Bonsirven, p. 40.

[3] b. Pesahim, ch. VI, p. 355.

[4] Mekilta, II, p. 169.

[5] b. Shabbath, ch. XIX, p. 660. He is listed in the Talmud Index only as a Tanna of the first to second centuries. He has the opinion that not only circumcision, but also all its preliminaries, supersede the Sabbath.

(T3)[1] that circumcision overrides the Sabbath. R. Akiba (T3) even interprets the requirement in the Eagle Speech of Ex. 19, "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant," as referring to the "covenant of circumcision and the covenant against idolatry."[2] R. Jose the Galilean (T3) goes so far as to say that the profanation of the covenant of circumcision is punishable by extinction.[3] This point of view is expressed also in a widely quoted statement by R. Eleazar of Modi'im (T2):

> He who profanes holy things and despises the festivals and shames his associates in public and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father and gives interpretations of Torah which are not according to Halachah, even though he possess Torah and good deeds, he has no portion in the world to come.[4]

In a similar teaching ben Azzai (T3) gives the neglect of circumcision as one of the reasons for the Babylonian exile.[1]

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[1] Tanhuma (Buber), cited in Montefiore and Loewe, p. 258 (#667). He uses this to argue that if something affecting a single one of man's members annuls the Sabbath, how much more is the Sabbath annulled when his life, which affects all two hundred forty-eight of his members, is affected.

[2] Mekilta, II, 204.

[3] Mekilta, II, 169. There is also a statement in Sifre on Num. 15:14 attributed to Rabbi (T5) indicating that circumcision is a necessary requirement for proselytes (along with immersion and sacrifice). (Levertoff, p. 92; Kuhn, pp. 300-1). Levertoff says that this statement is written in such a way as to indicate that it did not originate with Rabbi, but is much earlier.

[4] Mishnah, Aboth 3:15. With only minor variations in wording this saying is given also in Sifre on Numbers (Levertoff, p. 101; Kuhn, p. 329) and b. Sanhedrin, ch. XI, p. 672.

A number of references from this period relate the rite of circumcision to the sacrificial cult. Genesis Rabbah reports a discussion between Beth Shammai (T1) and Beth Hillel (T1-2) concerning the necessity of circumcising those who were born circumcised or those who were circumcised before becoming proselytes. According to R. Simeon b. Eleazer (T5) both schools agree that when one is born circumcised the blood of the covenant must still be made to flow from that person because he has a suppressed foreskin; they disagree only concerning a proselyte who was already circumcised, only Beth Shammai insisting on the flowing of blood in this case. According to others, however, both schools agree that the blood must be made to flow in these cases and disagree only concerning the case of one born circumcised and whose eighth day falls on the Sabbath.[2]

A similar interpretation, but one which more specifically relates Passover and circumcision is found in Mekilta in the comment on Ex. 12:6:

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[1] Midrash Lamentations, p. 66. "Israel did not go into exile until they had repudiated the Divine Unity, circumcision which had been given to the twentieth generation, the Decalogue, and the Pentateuch." He derives this haggadah from the word איכה, in Lam. 1:1 (א = 1 - Divine Unity; י = 10 = Decalogue; כ = 20 = circumcision which was given to the twentieth generation after Adam; and ה = 5 = Pentateuch).

[2] Genesis Rabbah, pp. 396-97. According to the latter interpretation the School of Shammai insist on the flow of blood in each case. The positions of the schools are similarly reported in Sifra on Lev. 12:3 (Bonsirven, p. 40).

> Why did the Scriptures require the purchase of the paschal lamb to take place four days before its slaughter? R. Matia, the son of Heresh (T3), used to say: "Behold it says: 'Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee and, behold, thy time was the time of love (Ezek. 16:8).'" This means the time has arrived for the fulfillment of the oath which the Holy One, blessed be He, had sworn to Abraham to deliver his children. But as yet they had no religious duties to perform by which to merit redemption, as it further says: 'thy breasts were fashioned and thy hair was grown; yet thou was naked and bare,' which means, bare of any religious deeds. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, assigned them two duties, the duty of the paschal sacrifice and the duty of circumcision, which they should perform so as to be worthy of redemption. For thus it is said: 'And when I passed by thee and saw thee wallowing in thy blood(s), I said unto thee: "In thy blood(s) live (Ezek. 16:6)."' Again it is said: 'As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water (Zech. 9:11).' For this reason Scripture required that the purchase of the paschal lamb take place four days before its slaughter. For one cannot obtain rewards except for deeds.[1]

R. Eliezer (T2?) likewise gives as the reason for the Exodus the merit of the covenant of circumcision and the blood of the paschal lamb and indicates that both will be the foundation of Messianic redemption.[2] In a previous section reference has already been made to the statement of R. Gamaliel (T2) which dates Abraham's circumcision on the Day of Atonement (on the basis of the use of an identical phrase in Gen. 17:25 and Lev. 23:28) and locates it on Moriah. Gamaliel further says that every year when God sees the blood of Abraham's circumcision he forgives all the sins of Israel.[1] A talmudic baraitha also has as part of the benediction pronounced at a circumcision:

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[1] Mekilta, I, 33-34. The editor notes (p. 34) that the rabbis say that it was in virtue of both bloods (Hebrew dual form in Ezekiel, בדמיך), passover sacrifice and circumcision, that the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt. The Zechariah prooftext is brought in to show that the Israelites practiced circumcision in Egypt.

[2] PRE, p. 210. A similar statement from Simeon of Teman (second century, according to Talmud Index) says that the sea was divided because of the merit of observing the commandment of circumcision--with special reference to Jer. 33:25. (Mekilta, I, 218).

> Therefore as a reward for this, O Living God, who art our portion, give command to save the blood of our flesh from the pit, for the sake of the covenant which thou hast set in our flesh.[2]

The notion of sheer obedience and of reward for obedience are prominent here, to be sure, and this discussion is a part of the whole general idea of merit. It is significant, however, that this obedience places considerable emphasis on blood and connects passover sacrifice and circumcision. It seems quite clear that the merit associated with circumcision is not to be dissociated from the value of blood within the mentality of the Judaism of this period.[3]

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[1] PRE, pp. 203-204.

[2] b. Shabbath, ch. XIX, p. 692. This same chapter of the Talmud speaks in detail of the circumcision of proselytes and says that "but for the blood of the covenant the ordinances of heaven and earth would not endure" (p. 693).

[3] Vermes, "Baptism and Jewish Exegesis: New Light from Ancient Sources," New Testament Studies, IV (1957-1958), 308-19, has made a careful study of Ex. 4:24-26 in early Jewish exegesis in terms of the light which it throws upon the Christian interpretation of baptism. He carefully analyzes the Septuagint and the targums, such works as Pseudo-Philo and Jubilees, and early rabbinic literature. He finds in the Septuagint and targums an emphasis on the sacrificial blood of the circumcision, but feels that the sacrificial theology was relegated to a second place after the time of Paul with the major focus then simply on the observance of the commandment to circumcise. While there is no doubt that there is great emphasis on the observance itself

The merits of the fathers. The tradition of the merits of the fathers (and mothers) receives considerable attention during this period. This is true concerning the doctrine in general and to a lesser extent as applied to circumcision (as already noted) and to the binding of Isaac. It is highly significant, however, that most of the references to the value of the merits of the fathers are focused upon this as a reason for the Exodus. It is only to a much lesser degree that the merits are said to be efficacious for the future of Abraham's descendents. There is at the same time, however, a fairly strong tradition which insists that the deeds of the patriarchs are efficacious for themselves alone.

In terms of the notion of merits of the fathers in general R. Eleazar (T, 1-2nd century) interprets Canticles 2:8 ("The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills,") to refer to the merits of the fathers (mountains) and mothers (hills).[1] It is said

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and the merit of this, it seems that Vermes has drawn the line too sharply. Early rabbinic views continued to be repeated by later generations of rabbis so that these views did not become extinct in a generation. Tannaim of the fifth and sixth generations still discuss the views of Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel on the necessity of the flow of blood. It would seem far more likely in fact that after the cessation of sacrificial cult in Jerusalem the sacrificial value of circumcision would remain important and would be understood so at least implicitly. I do not disagree with Vermes' exegesis, but simply with the too great rigidity of his conclusions. It is virtually inconceivable that the rite in which blood was shed should lose all sacrificial significance once this sacrificial meaning had become a part of the stream of rabbinic interpretation of circumcision.

[1] b. Rosh Hashanah, ch. I, p. 40. Dating is from Talmud Index.

elsewhere that God spoke to prophets outside Palestine only because of the merits of the fathers.[1] R. Johanan ben Zakkai (T1) indicates that the time of the bondage in Egypt was reduced from four hundred thirty years to four hundred years for the sake of the merits of the fathers and the mothers.[2] R. Eleazar b. Azariah (T3) indicates that it was because of the merits of Abraham that God brought Israel out of Egypt.[3] A more precise correspondence between the deeds of the patriarchs and the events of the Exodus tradition is made in a number of places. The most elaborate is in Mekilta which sees a parallel between Gen. 18 and the events of the Exodus. Abraham accompanied the ministering angels, and God accompanied the children in the wilderness forty years. Abraham fetched water for the angels, and God caused a well to spring up for his children in the wilderness. Abraham fetched bread and God sent down manna. Abraham ran into the herd, and God drove up quail for his children in the wilderness. Abraham invited the visitors to recline under the tree, and God spread out clouds of glory for his children. Abraham stood by them (Gen. 18:8), and God protected the homes of the children in Egypt that they should not be smitten.[4] There is further a talmudic tradition attributed to the School of Ishmael (T4;

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[1] Mekilta, I, 5-6.

[2] PRE, p. 376.

[3] Mekilta, I, 140-141. A R. Eleazar (perhaps the same) gives the merits of the fathers (along with distress, repentance, God's mercy and the term, i.e., the end of the slavery) as a reason for the Exodus in Deuteronomy Rabbah, p. 51.

[4] Mekilta, I, 184-85. There is a very similar treatment in Tosephta, Sotah IV: 1 ff.

Ishmael=T3) that for three things done by Abraham his descendents received three things: for taking butter and milk, the manna; for "he stood by them," the pillar of cloud; for fetching a little water, Miriam's well.[1] R. Eleazar of Modi'im (T2) understands the promise, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you (Ex. 16:4)" as a reference to the merits of the fathers ("for you" being understood as an aside).[2] This same rabbi in describing the battle with the Amalekites (Ex. 17:12) says that the sins of the people weighed heavily upon Moses at that hour and he could not bear it. He turned, therefore, to the deeds of the forefathers ("stone") and the mothers ("and he sat thereon").[3]

Alongside these traditions there are others which speak of the Exodus in terms of faith and its rewards. This faith is sometimes Abraham's and sometimes that of the Exodus generation themselves. Shemaiah (1st cent. B.C., Hillel's teacher) said that it was for the faith of Abraham that God opened the sea for the Israelites.[4] Abtalion (1st cent. B. C., also Hillel's teacher) says that this occurred because of the faith of the Exodus generation.[5] A. Marmorstein traces the origin of the discussion of merit to these two pre-Tannaitic teachers, with an emphasis on the merit of faith significantly. He regards

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[1] b. Baba Mezi'a, ch. VII, p. 499.

[2] Mekilta, II, p. 102.

[3] Mekilta, I, 5-6.

[4] Mekilta, I, 220.

[5] Ibid.

R. Eleazar of Modi'im (T2) as the first to lay stress upon the doctrine of the merits of the fathers--for consolation and encouragement in the period between 70-135 A.D.[1] Another tradition in Mekilta credits Abraham's inheritance both of this world and the world to come to his faith, and says that the Exodus occurred as a reward for Israel's faith.[2] A tradition in Sifre (on Deut. 1:8) indicates that Abraham is worthy for himself alone, and this is the case also for Isaac and Jacob.[3] R. Eliezer the Great (T2) seems to discount the entire notion of merits: "If the Holy One, blessed be He, were to enter into judgment with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not (even) they could stand his reproof."[4]

Thus it appears that the whole notion of merits of the fathers was understood in a very limited range and in most cases is used to connect the patriarchal tradition with the Exodus tradition. At the same time one cannot speak of a unanimous or well-developed "rabbinic doctrine of merits" at this point. Indeed there is significant opposition to such a notion.

When the question of merits of the fathers is examined with specific reference to Gen. 22 and the binding of Isaac, this event is related to the Exodus and once to the deliverance of Israel after David's planned census. Elsewhere the story of the binding of Isaac and its outcome is simply taken as a paradigm of God's continuing deliverance. R. Ishmael (T3) taught that the sword in Abraham's outstretched hand counteracted Pharaoh's sword.[1] In Mekilta the saddling of an ass by Abraham to go to Moriah "to do the will of his creator" counteracts the saddling of Balaam's ass to go and curse Israel.[2] There is an imaginative haggadah of R. Jose the Galilean (T3) that at the moment when the children went into the sea at the Exodus Mount Moriah began to move from its place with the altar for Isaac which had been built upon it and the whole scene that had been arranged upon it--Isaac as if he were bound and placed upon the altar; Abraham as if he were stretching forth his hand and taking the knife to slay his son.[3] In Mekilta the phrase used in connection with the Passover narrative, "and when I see the blood," is interpreted to identify this blood with the blood of the sacrifice of Isaac.[4] Likewise in this midrash it is when God sees the blood of the sacrifice of Isaac after David's census plans that he repents of his plan to destroy.[5]

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[1] A. Marmorstein, The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature (London: Printed at Oxford University Press, 1920), pp. 37, 41.

[2] Mekilta, I, 253.

[3] Sifre on Deuteronomy (Ljungman), pp. 22-23.

[4] b. 'Arakin, ch. IV, p. 97.

In some traditions Gen. 22 is not related to merits of the fathers at all, but is simply a paradigm of God's deliverance. There is a Mishnah tradition that in the days of R. Halafta (T2) and R. Hananiah b. Teradion (T3) the reader used to go before the ark and finish the whole Benediction without their answering "Amen" after him. This section continues:

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[1] Genesis Rabbah, p. 489.

[2] Mekilta, I, 199.

[3] Mekilta, I, 223.

[4] Mekilta, I, 57, 87-88.

[5] Mekilta, I, 57. The editor notes that Mekilta may follow a tradition of R. Joshua (T2) according to which 1/4 of a log of Isaac's blood was actually offered. The source for this opinion is cited as the Mekilta d. R. Simeon b. Yohai, ed. Hoffmann, p. 4.

> Blow the tekiah, ye priests, blow the tekiah! May he that answered Abraham our father on Mount Moriah answer you and hearken to the voice of your crying this day.[1]

A baraitha in the Babylonian Talmud has a similar point of view. This tells of the daughter of Nehonia the well-digger and her statement to R. Hanina b. Dosa (T1) that when she had fallen into a pit a ram came to her rescue with an old man leading it.[2] Two prominent Tannaim of this period discuss Gen. 22 with no interest at all except in the thoroughness of the testing of Abraham and his exaltation. R. Akiba (T3) simply says that this was an unequivocal testing, and R. Jose the Galilean (T3) simply interprets "proved" as "exalted like a ship's ensign."[3] Another early rabbi, however, R. Hanina b. Dosa (T1), agreeing with a tradition found in Aboth of the Mishnah concerning the pre-existence of the ram of Gen. 22,[4] attempts to relate some of the most important realities of Israel's faith and history to this chapter in a way which is the most elaborate treatment of Gen. 22 as a type of all redemption. According to him nothing which came from the ram was useless. The ashes were the base which was upon the top of the inner altar; the sinews were the strings of David's harp; the skin was Elijah's girdle; the left horn was the one which God blew at Sinai; and the right one will be blown in the age to come.[1]

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[1] Mishnah, Ta'anith 2:5. In Ta'anith 2:4 there is almost an identical statement after the 7th of the 18 Benedictions.

[2] b. Yebamoth, ch. XVI, p. 859. Also b. Baba Kamma, ch. V, pp. 287-88.

[3] Genesis Rabbah, pp. 485-86.

[4] Mishnah, Aboth 5:9.

Thus it appears that the matter of the present efficacy of the merits of the fathers is during this period in an embryonic stage of development. It is present in a few citations, but is strongly opposed in others. Since later midrashic and talmudic traditions develop very strongly in this direction, it seems most likely that the historical situation played a significant role in the direction of this development. It may very well be that the very cessation of sacrificial cult provided the impetus for this theological development in the direction of the lasting value of the historic sacrifice of Isaac.

The understanding of Abraham in rabbinic literature up to the end of the Bar Kochba War thus has a number of significant developments beyond that in earlier Biblical literature. While there is certainly not uniformity of rabbinic opinion, there is clearly a focus of interest in the discussion of Abraham. Many of the traditions are concerned to present Abraham as the model

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1. PRE, p. 229.

Jew, the exemplar of the Jewish faith. He is presented as a model in obedience, love, modesty, wisdom, hospitality, and rigid monotheism. He is even described as a king and priest, having gained the priesthood after the office was misused by the unworthy Melchizedek. It is significant, however, that there are alongside these glowing descriptions of Abraham's character a number of references which point to his lack of faith and his lack of zeal for proselytes.

The Abraham narratives are further discussed within the context of the doctrine of merits, but in most cases the merits of the fathers extend simply to the period of the Exodus. There are some significant exceptions at the same time which see a lasting future value for the merits of the fathers, but this is certainly not the dominant understanding of the merits of the fathers. This notion of merits in general is opposed, however, by a small, but strong, series of opinions.

The most significant development within this body of literature appears to be a rather strong interest in relating the patriarchal traditions to the cult, to specific holy days and to particular cultic acts. Both Passover and the Day of Atonement are dates given for such events as Abraham's circumcision, Isaac's birth and the sacrifice of Isaac. Even the levitical requirements concerning the proper animals for sacrifice are determined in the targums by the patriarchal traditions. There is a broader sense, of course, in which certain traditions try to tie together the great moments and figures in Heilsgeschichte, but there is a very prominent concern in the materials investigated in this section to tie the patriarchal traditions to the cult. This in itself has a tremendous potential for development in the direction of the merits of the fathers when there is in historical fact no sacrificial worship in existence.

One of the striking features of rabbinic thought in general in this period (with only a very few exceptions) is the way in which the emphasis on grace which was the major achievement of the Priestly writers in the Old Testament is overwhelming in its absence. Even when there is disagreement on whether it was fathers or the Exodus generation itself who merited the Exodus, the understanding is still that the Exodus was a reward for someone. Even when faith enters the discussion, the Exodus is a reward for faith. The activities of the fathers are rewarded either to the fathers or in a one-to-one correspondence to their descendents.

There is genuine danger in speaking of rabbinic thought or rabbinic opinion in general. This investigation has discovered some of the varieties of rabbinic opinion and certain major problems and scriptural narratives which exercised rabbinic imagination. It has indicated some of the trends of rabbinic opinion as they are specifically related to the Abraham stories. These are theological realities which would have their own development in the period of the later Tannaim and the Amoraim. They are at the same time theological realities which formed part of the matrix of primitive Christian theology, realities in part appropriated and in part rejected by the Christian communities.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Abraham traditions in the Hebrew scriptures indicated a major interest in the covenant with Abraham. Particularly in the exilic and post-exilic periods the patriarchal traditions provided an anchor for faith and were utilized as the foundation for a profound understanding of the grace of God which established and maintained the covenant relationship. The covenant relationship made demands for complete obedience to God, but the covenant was itself an everlasting covenant which even the weakness and disobedience of Israel could not finally annul. Moreover, there was within this framework of thought a significant universalistic dimension.

By far the largest number of documents under consideration in this dissertation belong to the category of Jewish intertestamental literature. These include documents apparently widely known both in Palestine and in the Diaspora and other documents known in more restricted circles of piety. They date from the beginning of the second century B. C. through the beginning of the second century A. D. They come from a period of considerable contact with the Hellenistic world by Jewish people, a contact regarded positively by some who appropriated ideas and ways of thinking. This was, at the same time, a period of Jewish conflict with Hellenistic powers, including the major crises of the Maccabean Revolt, the Jewish War, and the Second Jewish Revolt.

It was a period which experienced Palestine's domination by Seleucids and Romans, with only a brief period of independence and freedom.

Within this period and in response to these new historical realities the Abraham tradition took significant turns. While some of the earlier motifs continue to be repeated, the major interest lies in other directions. Traditional formulas continue to appear, and there are some documents such as the Qumran Hodayoth which continue to view divine grace as the ultimate reality underlying Israel's relationship to God. There are a few attempts to use the Abraham tradition in a universalistic way. There is some rabbinic interest in Abraham's proselytizing. While there are parallels in a few citations in the early Hellenistic fragments, Josephus, I and II Maccabees, the relationship of Israel to other peoples is argued convincingly only by Philo. And Philo does this largely from Greek philosophical presuppositions rather than Biblical insights.

Within the intertestamental period there is the inclusion of Abraham within the apocalyptic tradition. This is generally done with reference to the account in Gen. 15. This chapter is interpreted as a vision of the succession of nations and sometimes includes a view of Gehenna. The imitation of the visions in Daniel is often quite transparent. This apocalyptic interest is found not only in such works as Pseudo-Philo, II Esdras, II Baruch, the Testament of Abraham, and the Apocalypse of Abraham, but also in the targums and in rabbinic citations.

Quite early in the intertestamental period there is a major shift of emphasis from Abraham as recipient of the covenant promises to Abraham as model of piety and example for his descendents. While in some documents this is expressed in terms of Abraham's faithfulness when tested, it is quite often expanded to a tradition of his complete blamelessness. This treatment of the Abraham tradition is found in a very wide range of documents, from those most expressive of Palestinian piety to those thoroughly imbued with Hellenistic ideals. In some cases he is the keeper of all cultic laws; in some he is the model monotheist; in others he is the philosopher-king living under the rule of reason or wisdom. Occasionally it is even said that Abraham did not die.

Consistent with this concern with Abraham's character there is a modification of earlier tradition either by explaining away or omitting those features of the tradition which would mar the perfection of his piety. Such modification is present in Qumran texts as well as in the writings of Philo. This modification often extends to the treatment of Sarah, removing, e.g., her incredulity at the time her impending motherhood is announced. At the same time there exist alongside these traditions others which point out the weaknesses and flaws in Abraham's character. In some traditions also Abraham is subordinated both to Isaac (especially in Philo) and to Jacob.

The focus on the life and character of Abraham is closely related to the developing notion of the merits of the fathers. The strong emphasis on God's unmerited grace to Israel is subordinated and almost completely eliminated in many documents during this period. As early as ben Sira Abraham is assured of blessings because he is found faithful. With the notable exception of Qumran piety there are few literary witnesses to a profound understanding of grace during this period. More typical is a perspective which regards even faith as a work which procures merit. The rabbinic discussion concerning merit precedes the Tannaitic period. In the early development of this doctrine, the Exodus in particular is related to the merits of the fathers and in the opinion of some rabbis is a reward for this. Even in Philo there is a kind of Hellenistic version of the merits of the fathers. Particular attention is given in some documents to the merit of circumcision and the merit of binding of Isaac. Again there is, in this matter, an opposing tendency. One finds a rejection of the notion of the merits of the fathers in II Esdras and in teaching attributed to some important rabbis.

One of the most significant developments in the literature of this period is the increasing interest in Isaac. Considerable attention is given to him in a number of documents, but his greatest admirer is Philo, who describes him as a son of God and ranks him above Abraham and Jacob. In a number of documents this interest in Isaac affects the focus in understanding Gen. 22. Isaac's willingness and often his eagerness to sacrifice himself become dominant. This is true both in Hellenistic and rabbinic traditions.

Finally, there is in this period a significant tying together of the Abraham traditions and certain cultic traditions.

From simple statements that cultic laws originated with Abraham and that he kept them all, the tradition expands considerably. Particularly significant is the placing of certain patriarchal events within the liturgical calendar and the sacrificial emphasis placed on circumcision. In various documents the events of Gen. 15, the announcement of Isaac's birth, Isaac's birth, and the binding of Isaac are given a Passover dating. In some documents Abraham's circumcision is reported to have taken place on the Day of Atonement. The blood(s) of circumcision and passover are yoked together as meritorious. It is quite clear that at the beginning of the Christian Era the Isaac stories had been associated with Passover traditions within circles of Palestinian Judaism. The Biblical identification of Moriah with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem was further developed by relating the meaning of Isaac's sacrifice to the meaning of the Jerusalem cult. This was true not only in terms of the Passover, but also of the common sacrifices, as the targumic interpretation of Leviticus has shown. Particularly suggestive is the symbolizing of Isaac as a lamb offered to God.

CHAPTER III

THE ABRAHAM TRADITION IN THE GOSPELS AND ACTS

The origin and heritage of the primitive Christian community made inevitable its consideration and refraction of the Biblical tradition concerning Abraham. The statements concerning Abraham in the writings of Paul and the Letters to the Hebrews are well known. The significance of Abraham for the gospel writers has, however, received less attention.[1] This chapter explores the significance of the Abraham tradition within the gospels and Acts. In the investigation the tradition is explored within the total theological perspective of the writers. Further an attempt is made to determine in each case the ancient exegetical tradition which provides the most adequate framework for understanding the Christian writer's treatment of Abraham.

A survey of the explicit references to Abraham in the synoptic gospels shows that in Mark there is a single passage, the discussion between Jesus and the Sadducees concerning the resurrection (Mk. 12:18-27 = Matt. 22:23-33 = Lk. 20:27-40).

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[1] See, however, recently Nils A. Dahl, "The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts," Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 139-58.

The Q tradition contains two Abraham pericopes: the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:7-10 = Lk. 3:7-9) and the saying concerning the Messianic banquet (Matt. 8:11-12 = Lk. 13:28-29). Beyond these the only other explicit references in Matthew are in the genealogy at its beginning. The situation is quite otherwise in the special Lucan materials. In addition to the above references from Mark and Q there are the following references: the Magnificat (1:46-55); the Benedictus (1:68-79); the genealogy of Jesus (3:34); the healing of the infirm woman (13:10-17); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31); and the Zacchaeus story (19-:1-10). In Acts there are these additional references: Peter's sermon in the Temple (3:11-26); Stephen's speech (7:2-53), Paul's sermon in Antioch in Pisidia (13:16-41), and a final reference to the promise made to the fathers in Paul's defense before Agrippa (26:2-29). Within the Fourth Gospel the concern with Abraham is centered in the dialogue in chapter 8, although there are implicit references elsewhere which must also be explored.

This listing of explicit Abraham references indicates quite clearly that the writer for whom Abraham holds the greatest interest is Luke. This chapter will explore the synoptic tradition from the standpoint of the Lucan treatment, indicating the parallel interpretations where they exist. The understanding of the Abraham tradition in the Fourth Gospel will then be examined.[1]

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[1] The genealogical material in Matthew and Luke need simply be mentioned briefly. For Matthew Abraham represents the point of the beginning of Heilsgeschichte; Luke goes back through this point to Adam.

The Abraham Tradition in Luke's Writings

> . . . Luke was not primarily a historian who wanted to give a record of the past for its own sake, but a theologian who, by way of historical writing, wanted to serve the church of his own day amid the questions and perils that beset her. This "discovery" of Luke the theologian seems to me the great gain of the present phase of Luke-Acts study, whatever may be the final judgment about the character and importance of that theology.[1]

This statement by W. C. van Unnik represents the present focus of Lucan scholarship.[2] This study is interested primarily in the theological significance of the Abraham tradition for Luke. It makes certain assumptions without a recital of the history of scholarship on individual problems or a listing of all alternative positions. It is recognized that many matters of Lucan scholarship are presently being subjected to reconsideration.

This study assumes that the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are from the hand of the same author, a Hellenistic Christian who is traditionally called Luke. It is further assumed that he wrote the gospel ca. 80-85 A. D. and the

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[1] W. C. van Unnik, "Luke-Acts, a Storm Center in Contemporary Scholarship," Studies in Luke-Acts, pp. 23-24.

[2] See, e.g., Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, tr. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961); Helmut Flender, St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History, tr. Ilse and Reginald Fuller (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967); J. C. O'Neill, The Theology of Acts in Its Historical Setting (London: S. P. C. K., 1961). For a survey of recent Lucan scholarship see especially C. K. Barrett, Luke the Historian in Recent Study (London: The Epworth Press, 1961).

Acts ca. 85-90 A. D., primarily for Hellenistic audiences. It is further assumed that Luke made use of a number of sources, both written and oral, but that in his use he employed a large measure of creative freedom in order to proclaim the gospel from his own perspective. Unless stated otherwise it is assumed that his scripture is the Septuagint translation. The determination of Luke's sources with extreme precision is not, however, a major concern of this study. Whatever the sources--and this remains an area of considerable scholarly disagreement--we can assume that the present documents express the theological point of view of Luke.[1]

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[1] For general discussion of problems of background, text, etc., see especially Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, founded by Paul Feine and Johannes Behm; tr. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (14th revised ed., New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 86-134. See also the discussions in John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1960), pp. xi-lxxxix; S. MacLean Gilmour, "The Gospel According to St. Luke: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), VIII, 3-26; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* ("Black's New Testament Commentaries"; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), pp. 1-33; and G. H. C. Macgregor, "The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), IX, 3-23. The dating of Acts in the 60's by Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, revised by W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. liv, and the dating of Acts between 115-30 by O'Neill, p. 21, have not convinced most scholars. C. S. C. Williams, *The Acts of the Apostles* ("Harper's New Testament Commentaries"; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), pp. 14-15, suggests a date before the Fall of Jerusalem and before the Third Gospel, though he admits the possibility of a publication many years after composition. The Proto-Luke theory proposed by B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), Vincent Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel: A Study of the Proto-Luke Hypothesis* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), and more recently by Harald Sahlin, *Der Messias und das Gottesvolk: Studien zur Protolukanischen*

Not only does Luke have the greatest number of references to Abraham in the entire gospel tradition, but these references are carefully placed throughout his writing and not concentrated in a single place.[1] Within the gospel Abraham figures prominently in the infancy narratives. Within Jesus' public ministry he is mentioned in connection with John the Baptist's preaching, in one parable, one healing story, one story of the response of a publican to Jesus, and two statements concerning the end (the eschatological banquet and the resurrection). In Acts all of the Abraham references are in speeches, and significantly in speeches given by each of the three major figures in that book: Peter, Stephen, and Paul.

It is noticeable at the outset that what interests Luke is not Abraham's faith or his works, his character or his piety, but rather God's promise made to Abraham and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In this he is similar to the Deuteronomists and

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Theologie ("Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis," XII; Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1945), does not materially affect the discussion in this chapter. The special problems related to the Western textual tradition are discussed in the commentaries cited above. It is generally agreed that each Western variant must be examined individually. Concerning the Western text in Acts, e.g., Mcgregor says that while certain individual Western readings may have some claim to originality on their own merit, the Western text as a whole is almost certainly secondary (IX, 10). The most complete recent discussion of the source criticism of Acts is Jacques Dupont, The Sources of the Acts, tr. Kathleen Pond (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964).

[1] Conzelmann's statement: "The fact that Abraham is more prominent in Luke than in Mark is a result of his sources," p. 166, fails to deal adequately with this datum and dismisses it prematurely.

the Priestly writers of the Old Testament. As Nils Dahl has pointed out: ". . . Luke seems to think all messianic prophecies reiterate and unfold the one promise to the fathers, first given to Abraham."[1] The promise, with focus on that which was its major meaning for Luke, is cited in Acts 3:25: "And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Most of the Abraham pericopes in Luke-Acts deal with the dimensions of the eschatological blessing in the fulfillment of the promise to the fathers through the Davidic Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. This is a part of the general perspective of Lucan theology which centers on the fulfillment of prophecy.[2] It has been suggested that this is the direction of the statements concerning ἀσφάλειαν and πεπληροφορημένων in the prologue of the gospel.[3] Luke begins with the kerygma of the church and seeks to confirm that belief by reference to the scriptures, understood as a unity pointing to their own eschatological fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

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[1] Dahl, p. 148. Note especially Lk. 10:24; 24:44; Acts 3:18, 24; 7:52; 10:43; 24:14.

[2] See Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann, ed. W. Eltester ("Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche," XXI; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1954), pp. 165-96. Dahl, p. 152. Schubert's terminology of "proof from prophecy" is perhaps a less precise and accurate description than "eschatological fulfillment of prophecy." See Paul S. Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," Studies in Luke-Acts, pp. 119-20.

[3] Dahl, p. 153. Charles H. Talbert, Luke and the Gnostics (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 153.

The infancy narratives. The Semitic character of Lk. 1-2 vis-à-vis the classical Hellenistic style of the prologue has led a number of scholars to posit Hebrew or Aramaic sources for this part of the gospel, while others have insisted that this is a literary device of Luke's, in imitation of the style of the Septuagint and particularly fitting for this part of his gospel. Others insist that the question of sources here must now remain *sub iudice*.[1] The dismissal of Lk. 1-2 from any serious consideration in the overall presentation of the pattern of Heilsgeschichte, a position taken by Hans Conzelmann, however, has rightly received criticism.[1]

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[1] Among those arguing for a Hebrew or Aramaic source are Paul Winter, especially "Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy stories of the Third Gospel," *New Testament Studies*, I (1954-55), 111-21; "The Cultural Background of the Narrative in Luke i and ii," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLV (1954), 159-67, 230-42, 287; "On Luke and Lucan Sources," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLVII (1956), 217-42; "The Proto-Source of Luke i," *Novum Testamentum*, I (1956), 184-99; "The Main Literary Problem of the Lucan Infancy Story," *Anglican Theological Review*, XL (1958), 257-64. Also René Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc I-II* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1957), p. 13; and "Traces d'allusions etymologiques en Luc 1-2," *Biblica*, XXVII (1956), 435-56, and XXVIII (1957), 1-23. Also Sahlin, pp. 9-10, and Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, tr. John Marsh from 3rd German ed. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 296. Those arguing that these are essentially the creative work of Luke in imitation of a Biblical style include Nigel Turner, "The Relation of Luke I and II to Hebraic Sources and to the Rest of Luke-Acts," *New Testament Studies*, II (1955-56), 100-109; Pierre Benoit, "L'Enfance de Jean-Baptist selon Luc 1," *New Testament Studies*, III (1956-58), 169-94; Creed, pp. 306-307. Those who prefer to leave the question of sources as an open one include: Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (10th ed., "The International Critical Commentary"; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. xlix; Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 70; and Walther Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (2 Aufl., "Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament"; Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1961), pp. 54-55. For a good summary of this problem see H. H. Oliver, "The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," *New Testament Studies*, X (1963-64), 202-226; and R. McL. Wilson, "Some Recent Studies in the Lucan

Because of the obvious Old Testament style and language of Lk. 1-2 many scholars have found parallels from which Luke appears to draw. Not all of these supposed parallels are in agreement, however.[2] To guard against subjectivism (which is a

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Infancy Narratives," *Studia Evangelica*, ed. Kurt Aland *et al.* ("Texte und Untersuchungen," LXXXIII; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1959), pp. 235-53.

[1] See, e.g., Conzelmann, p. 172. For a criticism of Conzelmann's position see Oliver, and W. Barnes Tatum, "The Epoch of Israel: Luke I-II and the Theological Plan of Luke-Acts," *New Testament Studies*, XIII (1966-67), 184-95.

[2] Benoit, e.g., sees the birth of John the Baptist as patterned on that of Isaac and the announcement to Mary as similar to the announcement to Gideon, 177, 192. M.D. Goulder and M. L. Sanderson, "St. Luke's Genesis," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., VIII (1957), 13-15, see Zechariah and Elizabeth as a new Abraham and Sarah, and Jesus as a new Jacob. J.P. Audet, "L'Annonce à Marie," *Revue Biblique*, LIX (1956), 352-53, sees the story of Gideon as the model for the annunciation to Mary. The similarity of the Magnificat to the Song of Hannah in I Kings 2 is well known. See Creed, p. 23. Among those who have pointed to parallels with the Abraham stories in Genesis are: Plummer; Benoit; Flender; Michel Allard, "L'Annonce à Marie et les annonces de naissances miraculeuses de l'Ancien Testament," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, LXXVIII (1956), 730-33; C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels* (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: Macmillan and Company, 1927), II, 365; Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 196; and P. Gerhard Voss, *Die Christologie der Lukanischen Schriften in Grundzügen* ("Studia Neotestamentica," II; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965), pp. 64-65, 77. Voss, pp. 64-65, suggests that the "God with you" statement goes back to the Exodus and the leading of the fathers, to the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. While the expression is not met in the Abraham narratives, it does have a central place in the Isaac and Jacob narratives in JE and belongs essentially to covenant terminology.

danger in all attempts to find parallels), it is best to begin with the explicit statements and quotations as they relate to the Abraham tradition. In both the Magnificat and the Benedictus, in the context of the rejoicing over the coming of the Davidic Messiah, there is a reference to the fulfillment of the promise sworn to Abraham. Further in the annunciation Gabriel says to Mary, "For with God nothing will be impossible." This is almost an exact quotation of the statement of the heavenly visitor(s) to Abraham in Gen. 18:14 concerning Isaac's birth.[1] While this is not to deny the influence of such passages as the Song of Hannah (I Sam. 2) on Luke's thought, the Abraham references are sufficiently obvious and numerous to make an investigation of the relationship between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus necessary. Also since Luke indicates in the canticles that the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in the coming of the Messiah is a fulfillment spoken of by the prophets, one must examine certain prophetic passages which are echoed in Lk. 1-2 in order to comprehend more fully Luke's presentation of the infancy narratives. Thirdly, since Luke writes as a Hellenistic Christian, some attention must be given to the relationship between his infancy narratives and the Isaac speculation of Hellenistic Judaism.

In Gen. 18 the Lord appears to Abraham at Mamre.[2] God says to Abraham that Sarah will have a son in the spring. When

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[1] Lk.: οὐκ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶν ῥῆμα ; Gen.: μὴ ἀδυνατεῖ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ῥῆμα .

[2] In the Genesis text there is alternation between the Lord and three angels as the visitors to Abraham in the story.

Sarah is overheard laughing, the Lord asks, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" In Gen. 21 when Isaac is born, Sarah says, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will rejoice with me."[1] In Lk. 1 the promise of a messianic child is made to Mary by the angel Gabriel. She inquires how this can be, since she has no husband.[2] She is told that with God nothing is impossible and she responds, not with incredulity, but with humble submission. After her meeting with Elizabeth she sings the Magnificat in which she rejoices that God has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden and has mercifully fulfilled the promise made to Abraham.[3] In the one case the promise is made to Abraham;

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[1] LXX: συγχαρεῖται. Notice has already been made of the modification of Sarah's incredulity into a statement of joy in a number of intertestamental writings.

[2] The present Lucan text presents a doctrine of virgin birth. Leaney, p. 23, has suggested that behind the present text are three not wholly unified traditions: (a) that Mary conceived virginally, with no reference to being betrothed, (b) that Mary was divinely promised that she would be the mother of the Messiah after her marriage to Joseph, her betrothed, and (c) that she conceived during her betrothal by cohabitation with Joseph.

[3] Sahlin, p. 68, believes that the Magnificat belonged originally to Zechariah, and the Benedictus to Anna. Bultmann, pp. 296-7, follows certain late mss. and some fathers in reading "Elizabeth" rather than "Mary" in vs. 46. Creed, pp. 22-23, says that the reading "Mary" is not original, and perhaps the original text omitted the subject. Leaney, p. 24, however, points out: ". . . the testimony of the majority of codices to the reading Mary cannot lightly be passed over, and it is likely that this is what Luke wrote, the variant Elizabeth being due to the context." The primary reason for denying the song to Mary is often a literal interpretation of ταπείνωσιν (1:48) as limited to barrenness, and therefore more appropriate for Elizabeth than for Mary (e.g., Creed, p. 23). This, however, is undue literalizing and fails to take into account the symbolic significance of Mary in Luke's narrative. In support of this latter position see Grundmann, p. 66; Sahlin, p. 164; Gilmour, VIII, 42, suggests a direct parallel with I Sam. 1:11, but admits the possibility of a more general application.

in the other, to Mary. In both cases the birth of the child of Abraham is the occasion of great joy.[1]

Since Luke regards Jesus as the seed of Abraham in whom the world is blessed, and since he regards this as the message of the prophets, the question of the particular prophecies most closely related to Lk. 1-2 must be explored.

René Laurentin has suggested a major contact between Lk. 1 and the eschatological prophecy in Zeph. 3:14-17, a passage in which the language of the Septuagint is unusually close to that of Luke:

> Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!
> Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!
> The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies.
> The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more.
> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.
> The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;
> he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;
> he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival."[2]

Laurentin has point out that in this passage addressed to the Daughter of Zion, i.e., Israel personified as a woman, there is the announcement of the messianic joy of Yahweh's coming to dwell in Zion as king and savior. This is closely related to the messianic passage in Zech. 9:9 addressed also to the Daughter of Zion and to Joel 2:21-27, addressed to the sons of Zion.[1] It is significant that of the four uses of the imperative form, Χαῖρε in the Septuagint, three occur in these passages not concerned with commonplace salutation, but with announcements of messianic joy.[2] This is precisely the joy which Luke celebrates in these canticles, the visitation of Israel by God through his Davidic Messiah.

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[1] In Genesis there is, of course, an etymological word play.

[2] Laurentin, Structure, pp. 64-67. See also Voss, p. 62; and William E. Lynch, Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), p. 93.

Given the fairly frequent representation of Israel as a maiden, even as a virgin, e.g., in Lam. 1:15,[3] the address to this maiden in messianic prophecies, and the literary sophistication of Luke himself, it seems strongly probable that Luke intends to represent Mary as the Daughter Zion, the personification of the faithful remnant in whom is fulfilled in a final and eschatological way the ancient promise made to Abraham.[4] As Laurentin suggests, Mary is the eschatological personification of Israel as Abraham is the original personification of Israel;

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[1] Laurentin, *Structure*, p. 66, mistakenly says that all three are addressed to the Daughter of Zion. He regards the Zephaniah prophecy as the oldest and the other two as dependent upon it.

[2] The other passage is Lam. 4:21.

[3] LXX: παρθένος. See A. G. Hebert, "The Virgin Mary as the Daughter of Zion," *Theology*, LIII (1950), 403-10.

[4] W. F. Stinespring, "No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar," *Encounter*, XXVI (1965), 133-41, has shown conclusively that the Hebrew expression should be translated "Daughter Zion." This important article provides additional support for the thesis of this study.

and the Magnificat takes the movement from Mary to Abraham.[1]

This view of Israel within Christian tradition personified as a woman giving birth to the Messiah is supported by the reference in Rev. 12 to the woman clothed with the sun giving birth to a male child, and also the citation in Matthew of Micah 5:2 which is part of a "travail of the Daughter of Zion" passage. It appears that certain Christian circles which were concerned with the birth and infancy of the Messiah did then reflect upon the Daughter of Zion prophecies and that Luke's presentation of Mary is within this framework. Luke, however, makes more explicit a relationship between Abraham and Mary. In the one, Israel is personified at the beginning, in the other, at the conclusion of God's dealing with his people.[2] If this is the case, the words of the Magnificat are most appropriate in the mouth of Mary, and they refer not to her personal childlessness, but to the low estate of the people of God and to their rejoicing at the time of the messianic visitation.[3] Here also the primary emphasis is on God's grace as seen by the use of κεχαριτωμένη (1:28) and εὗρες χάριν (1:30) and the unexpected joy which reverberates through the whole passage.

This wonderful eschatological motherhood is described in terms of the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit, using a word which in Ex. 40:35 describes the cloud of divine glory over the ark of the covenant, and in the gospels is used in the Transfiguration narratives.[1] This description of the activity of the Spirit is peculiar to the Lucan infancy narrative, and is best understood in terms of Hellenistic Judaism's emphasis on the Spirit's creative activity.[2] As the counterpart of Gen. 1:1 this eschatological activity of the Spirit is somewhat parallel to the beginning-end symbolism of Abraham and Mary. Certainly the major concern of Luke is to indicate the ultimate origin of the Messiah in such wise as to account for his unique status. He makes this quite clear when he says διὸ καί the child will be called the Son of God (1:35).

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[1] Laurentin, Structure, p. 85.

[2] Cf. Voss, pp. 64-65.

[3] Hebert, p. 406.

It appears then that in Lk. 1-2 there is a midrash, a theological reflection on the significance of the infancy of Jesus. With the notion of the seed of Abraham in the foreground of the promise the relationship between the birth of Isaac and of the birth of Jesus is entirely natural. This is not done, however, through proof texts, a characteristic of Matthew's infancy stories, but through allusions and subtleties of language.[3]

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[1] Cf. Laurentin, Structure, pp. 73-77; G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," Studies in the Gospels, (Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot), ed. D. E. Nineham, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp.167-68: L. Legrand, "L'arrière-plan néotestamentaire de Lc I, 35," Revue Biblique, LXX (1963), 170-74.

[2] See especially C. K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition (London: S. P. C. K., 1966), pp. 5-24; Laurentin, Structure, pp. 79-80.

[3] Lampe, p. 200. Laurentin, Structure, p. 8: "Ses réflexions, se situent dans le cadre du genre midrashique parvenu a un extrême degré de raffinement. Il faut entrer dans sa subtilité même. C'est la principale difficulté."

Nevertheless, as in the case of Paul's argument in Galatians, the discussion of Jesus as seed of Abraham makes almost unavoidable a consideration of Isaac in some fashion by the writer, when the reality of faith is confronted by the scripture.

That this was indeed the case in Luke's mind is made even more probable through a recollection of the Isaac speculation in Hellenistic Judaism. It has already been noted that Isaac is a figure of intense interest for Philo as well as others, and that at least at one level of thought Philo speaks of a virgin birth of this Son of God. Sarah became a virgin in old age through the activity of God. Philo certainly is not concerned with physical virginity, since in some cases he speaks of Abraham as Isaac's father. It must be asked whether for Luke the presentation of a virgin birth (whatever the sources from which he drew) is not primarily a way of focusing on the divine participation in the origin of the Messiah, rather than simply as a means of eliminating paternal participation.[1] Thomas Boslooper has shown that for Hellenistic Judaism stories of "virgin births" are used primarily to account for superior virtues of important

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[1] Barrett, The Holy Spirit, p. 24: "The central, biblical idea with which we have to deal is that the entrance of Jesus into the world was the inauguration of God's new creation and therefore has its only true analogy in Genesis; the means whereby the Church arrived at this end was Hellenistic Judaism, and a secondary product of this means was belief in the virginity of the mother." See also Thomas Boslooper, The Virgin Birth (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 228.

Old Testament figures.[1] Luke may well have thought of virginity at various levels of thought, but with a primary emphasis on its theological symbolism. While Philo's thought is not eschatologically oriented and while his allegorizing is extreme, he may be more representative of a Hellenistic Jewish mentality than is generally recognized. It is significant that even when Paul discusses the birth of Isaac and the two wives of Abraham he resorts to allegory and speaks of Isaac as having been born κατὰ πνεῦμα (Gal. 4:29). In the interpretation of Luke due weight must be given not only to his probable Palestinian sources, but also to his Hellenistic mentality. For Luke as for Paul, Jesus is the only σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ who in any ultimate and final sense fulfills the ancient promise. The birth traditions of Jesus, however, recall the birth traditions of the first child of the promise.[2] Luke's concern then is to present Jesus as promised Messiah, promised since the oath to Abraham, witnessed to by prophets. Certain birth traditions at his disposal, messianic prophecies concerning the daughter of Zion, and a Hellenistic theological interpretation of virgin births, all contribute to Luke's witness in the representation of the fulfillment of ancient promises in the last days. Using a kind of typological thinking found early in the Bible, he proclaims the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise in the birth and infancy of the Messiah.

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[1] Boslooper, p. 194. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 202, points out that the starting point of the Hellenistic Jewish midrash was Gen. 21:1, which asserts God's act in Isaac's birth. Barrett posits a more popular midrashic background than does Boslooper.

[2] Otto Michel and Otto Betz take the position that one need not look to Hellenistic Judaism for parallels in thought. They find parallels concerning the birth of the Messiah in the womb of Israel in the Qumran writings and raise the question of how the Messiah could be born in a celibate Qumran community except by a divine miracle! Their arguments, however, are not strong enough to set aside the obvious affinity of Luke's thought with that of Hellenistic Judaism. At most their essay simply indicates that in the Qumran community Israel was personified as a woman from whom the Messiah would be born. Michel and Betz, "Von Gott gezeugt," *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche* (Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias), ed. Walther Eltester ("Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche," XXVI; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1960), pp. 3-23. See especially pp. 14-20.

The Preaching of John the Baptist (Lk. 3:7-9 = Matt. 3:7-10). In this material drawn from the Q tradition Luke presents the Baptist as a witness to the nature and possibility of true sonship to Abraham in the eschatological hour. In Luke this part of the gospel is separated from the public ministry by the genealogy of Jesus. John's mission thus belongs more distinctly to the period of preparation than is the case in Matthew. The content of the pericope in Matthew and Luke, however, is almost identical, far more so than is usually the case in their employment of Q.[1] In Matthew the Baptist addresses "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees"; in Luke, he addresses "the crowds coming out to be baptized by him." It is almost impossible to determine the original setting of this pericope, since these audiences are conventional with these evangelists.[1] The Baptist calls his hearers "offspring of vipers" and warns them not to rely complacently upon their physical descent from Abraham to save them from the eschatological judgment.[2] This descent counts for nothing where repentance and ethical obedience are missing. In a probable Aramaic play on words the Baptist says that God can create children of Abraham out of the stones.[3] While this aspect of the tradition is not developed, there is contained in it a point of view extremely congenial to Luke's theology--God's power to bring the non-Jew into Israel as a genuine Israelite and child of Abraham. As F. W. Beare has pointed out, there is an implicit universalism here.[4] While these words are in keeping with what is known elsewhere of the Baptist and his prophetic preaching, it should be recognized also that within the primitive Christian community the history of tradition may reflect its apologetic use in the face of Judaizing problems.[1] Thus in this proclamation of the coming of the eschatological hour which declares that the axe is already laid to the root of the trees, sonship to Abraham, i.e., the possibility of receiving the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, is placed in the framework of repentance and moral obedience. This implicitly opens up the possibility that in the remainder of Luke's Gospel sonship to Abraham may be claimed by anyone who responds to the ministry of the Messiah.

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[1] Francis Wright Beare, The Earliest Records of Jesus (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 38-39.

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[1] Walter E. Bundy, Jesus and the First Three Gospels (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 48. Beare, pp. 38-39. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1927), II, 14. Creed, p. 51. The derogatory name in this pericope is in Matthew addressed to the Pharisees first by John and afterwards by Jesus (3:7; 12:34; 23:33). Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, (10th ed.; "The International Critical Commentary"; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 90.

[2] Luke: μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν . Matthew: μὴ δόξητε λέγειν . The Lucan form may be a Semitism. Creed, p. 52.

[3] אבניא - בניא . Grundmann, p. 103. Plummer, p. 90, Creed, p. 52. M. J. Lagrange, Evangile selon Saint Luc (Huitème edition; Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1948), p. 107. Sherman E. Johnson, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), VII, 205. There may be a further allusion to Is. 51:1, to Abraham as the rock from which God hewed his people.

[4] Beare, p. 39. Cf. Floyd V. Filson, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew ("Harper's New Testament Commentaries"; New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1960), p.63.

The healing of the infirm Woman (Lk. 13:10-17). This story and the next three passages under consideration are placed by Luke in the long section of this gospel (9:51-19:27) constituting the journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. This healing story is peculiar to Luke. It is the only instance in which Jesus is represented as preaching in a synagogue in the latter part of his ministry,[2] and his opponent, the ruler of the synagogue, is introduced by Luke into the synoptic outline.[3] The story in its present form appears to be a conflation of a narrative unit reporting an exorcism (which was probably originally a simple healing story) and a controversy story built around the saying in vs. 15.[1] The healing story itself is quite close to the healing of the man with dropsy in Lk. 14:1-6, and both of these stories may be variants of the healing of the man with the withered hand (Mk. 3:1-6 = Matt. 12:9-14 = Lk. 6:6-11).[2] The center of interest in the present form of the story is, however, in the controversy rather than in the healing. Using the familiar rabbinic argument "from minor to major" Jesus argues that if animals are loosed on the Sabbath day without violation of the commandments against work, a woman, a daughter of Abraham, ought certainly to be loosed from the bonds of Satan on the Sabbath.[3] For Luke it is precisely the messianic task to release God's people from their enemies and from the hands of all who hate them (Lk. 1:68-79), above all from the Satanic power which oppresses them. This activity causes rejoicing among the people and shames his adversaries. Salvation is the work of the Lord and no law or ordinance must be allowed to hinder this.

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[1] Leaney, p. 107. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, tr. John Marsh from 3rd German ed. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 117, states that it is "quite accidental" that these words are ascribed to John and not to Jesus. This assertion shows unwarranted skepticism. For the Judaizing problem within the gospel tradition see discussion of John 8 infra.

[2] Creed, p. 182.

[3] Bundy, p. 366.

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[1] Gilmour, VIII, 242. Bundy, pp. 366-367. Vs. 15 appears also in Matt. 12:11 appended to a Marcan healing story and also in Lk. 14:5. Bultmann, p. 12, regards the account as a story composed on the basis of vs. 15. W. L. Knox, The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels, ed. H. Chadwick (2 vols.; Cambridge: At the University Press, 1957), II, 78, argues for the unity of the pericope.

[2] Beare, p. 173.

[3] The play on λύω is somewhat forced. Creed, p. 182. Beare, p. 173. θυγατηρ Ἀβραάμ appears here only in the New Testament, but is appropriate to Luke's general attitude toward women in this gospel. Interestingly the Cairo Damascus Document, XIII: 22-23, prohibits the raising of an animal from the pit or ditch on the Sabbath (cited by Leaney, p. 207).

The placement in this chapter of the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven may have been intended by Luke as part of Jesus' synagogue discourse. Their fundamental idea is unmistakable in pointing to great results from small beginnings, and to Luke and his readers the point would probably bring to mind the Gentile mission.[1] The messianic activity of Jesus in Israel appealing to the physical descendents of Abraham leads, as in the ancient promise, to the blessing of the nations.

The saying concerning the messianic banquet (Lk. 13:28-29 = Matt. 8:11-12). This saying from the Q tradition is bracketed with a number of other sayings, not perfectly unified. It stands between a notice (13:22) that Jesus is still on the road to Jerusalem and teaching associated only with "one sabbath" (14:1).[2] Within the section (vss. 22-35) the determining ideas are the rejection of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries, the admission of Gentiles to the Kingdom of God, and the forthcoming fate of Jerusalem. After describing the closing of the door to the contemporaries of the Lord, designated workers of iniquity, Luke (vs. 29) has the statement that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when these outsiders view the messianic banquet.[1] The notion of the messianic banquet is conventional in Jewish thought, probably taking its point of departure from Is. 25:6-8.[2] Luke's form of the saying is more extensive at two major points: the addition of "and all the prophets" to the enumeration of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as being in the kingdom; and the addition of others "from north and south" to those coming and sitting at table. The mention of "all the prophets" is undoubtedly an expression of Luke's central conviction that all the prophets bore witness faithfully to the messianic fulfillment of God's promise. The addition of "north and south" may reflect the influence of Ps. 107:3 which describes a pilgrimage of the redeemed of the Lord from the Diaspora.[3]

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[1] Creed, p. 182. He suggests, p. 184, that Luke probably got these two parables from Q.

[2] Beare, p. 174, notes that there are Matthean parallels to Lk. 13:22-30, but in five different contexts. The awkwardness of the shift from the narrow door (vs. 24) to the closed door (vs. 25) has been noted. Bultmann, p. 163. Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 163. The possibility of the evangelists' having followed two parallel lines of tradition has been suggested by Beare, p. 174, and Knox, II, 79.

This same saying concerning the messianic banquet is used by Matthew as the conclusion of the story of the healing of the centurion's son. There the statement concerning weeping and gnashing of teeth follows the statement about the banquet. It appears that Matthew saw this as a suitable place for these sayings since this is the first occasion in that gospel reporting that a Gentile believed in Jesus.[4] Significantly the logion in Lk. 13:30 has the mildest form of any of its several appearances in the synoptic gospels.[1] Whatever the original form and origin of the saying, Luke looks at it from the point of view of the historical situation in his own time as does Matthew. Then large numbers of Gentiles had entered the eschatological kingdom of God in proleptic fulfillment of the ancient promise of the blessing of the nations of the earth through Abraham and his seed.

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[1] The "weeping and gnashing of teeth" occurs only here in Luke. Knox, II, 80. Leaney, p. 186.

[2] Perrin, p. 162. Johnson, VIII, 341.

[3] Perrin, p. 162.

[4] Montefiore, II, 130, suggests that this is to some extent inappropriate because thus far in Matthew Jesus has found nothing but faith.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31). This parable is placed following a section of teaching addressed to the disciples which includes a parable, concerning a dishonest steward, as well as some sayings concerning mammon. Jesus' words are said to have been heard by Pharisees who scoffed at his teaching. According to Luke this parable, peculiar to his tradition, is addressed to Pharisees.[2] The parable begins without narrative introduction. This is without parallel, though perhaps the closeness in content to the preceding sayings accounts for this.[3] The first part of the parable concerns the reversal of fortunes of a rich man and a beggar in the afterlife, a commonplace story found in other literatures.[1] Whatever its origin, in Luke's parable it is the background for the climactic conversation between Abraham and the rich man.[2] The insensitive rich man has died, been buried, and gone to Hades. Lazarus has died, but he has been carried by angels to Abraham's bosom.[3] While the parable does not indicate whether the situation is intermediate or final, the important matters are the torment of the rich man and the bliss of Lazarus.[4]

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[1] Mk. 10:31 and Matt. 19:30, "many"; Matt. 20:16, "the first, the last." Lk. 13:20, "some."

[2] Thomas Walter Manson, The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1950), pp. 295-97, suggests that the words were originally addressed to Sadducees, but this lacks support. The suggestion of R. P. C. Hanson, "A Note on Luke XVI. 14-31," The Expository Times, LV (1943-44), 221-22, that this chapter reproduces Q material, some of which (such as this parable) Matthew has elected not to use, is not convincing.

[3] Knox, II, 97.

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[1] T. W. Manson, pp. 297-98. Creed, pp. 209-10. Perrin, p. 112. Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, tr. S. H. Hooke from 6th German ed. (rev. ed., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 178. Many commentators cite the 1918 article of H. Gressmann, "Vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus," in the *Abhandlungen d. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaft*, which treats an Egyptian tale posited as the original for this. Bultmann, p.196, disagrees with the theory of an Egyptian origin and argues for a wholly Jewish provenance.

[2] H. J. Cadbury, "A Proper Name for Dives," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXI (1962), 399-402, points out that the Bodmer papyrus, P 75, has the name, Νευης, for the rich man, but does not draw any conclusions.

[3] J. D. M. Derrett, "Fresh Light on St. Luke XVI," *New Testament Studies*, VII (1960-61), 372-374, suggests that this Lazarus (the only person named in any parable), is really Eliezer, Abraham's servant in Genesis. This is intriguing, but the name Eliezer/Eleazar was extremely common, and the rabbinic legend which Derrett cites concerning Abraham's Eliezer is post-Mishnaic.

[4] Plummer, p. 398. Among those who do not regard these as both references to the intermediate state are Leaney, pp. 225-26; Creed, p. 212; T. W. Manson, p. 299; Montefiore, II, 538, Strack-Billerbeck, II, 228. Those arguing for two divisions of Hades, one for righteous and one for wicked, include Gilmour, VIII, 290; Grundmann, p. 329; Jeremias, pp. 184-85; Plummer, p. 393; and William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* ("The Moffatt New Testament Commentary"; New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1930), p. 190.

The parable contains the earliest occurrence of the phrase, "the bosom of Abraham," perhaps a concretizing of the Old Testament image of a dead man being "gathered to his fathers," and used as a metaphor of intimacy suggested either by banqueting (e.g., John 13:23) or the relation of father and child (as in John 1:18), probably the latter.[1] The notion of the patriarchs' receiving of the faithful after death, however, has already been noted in IV Macc. 13:17.

In full sight of the bliss of Lazarus, the rich man requests Abraham to send Lazarus to relieve his torment, and then to warn his brothers concerning the judgments after death.[2] Abraham addresses the rich man as "child" but indicates that the traffic he has requested is impossible and that in fact the rich man's family has sufficient teachers in the Law and the Prophets to warn them. When further protests are made, Abraham replies: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead" (16:31).

Luke not only gives expression here to his motif of Jesus' concern for the poor, but he defines again genuine sonship to Abraham in ethical terms. The rich man in Hades calls Abraham "father," and Abraham calls him "child." There is no denial of the physical relationship; Luke's parable states simply that physical descent counts for nothing apart from righteousness. In its context the story of the rich man is of one who was insensitive to Lazarus and who made unfaithful use of mammon. In the parable Luke again indicates one of his major themes--that the nature of salvation is clearly taught in the Law and the Prophets. When one does not listen to the Word of God there, no miraculous attestation will convince men of its truth. Whether or not this is an authentic parable of Jesus, in its present form and place in Luke's gospel and in the historical situation in which Luke wrote, the possibility must be allowed that it echoes Christian reflection upon and response to Jewish disbelief in the resurrection of Jesus.[1] For Luke the Law and the Prophets point primarily to their own eschatological fulfillment in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Lk. 24:44-49). Given this possibility then, Luke fashions his material in such a way that Abraham in Paradise is a witness to the fulfillment of the promise made to him and points to the sufficiency of the Biblical statements for proof of that fulfillment. In the parable Lazarus is a rather secondary figure. The major figures are the rich man, who has not heeded the scriptures, and Abraham, who points to the truth of the scriptures and the necessity of heeding them.

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[1] Leaney, pp. 225-26. Creed, p. 212. I. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, (2nd series; Cambridge: At the University Press, 1924), p. 203, indicates that the first Talmud reference is from a third-century Babylonian rabbi.

[2] Full weight should be given to the placement of this parable by Luke within a body of teaching on the use of mammon and the implication that the rich man used his riches unfaithfully in disregarding the plight of the poor.

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[1] Creed, p. 209. Beare, p. 183. Bundy, p. 384. William Manson, pp. 191-92. Montefiore, II, 540. Burton S. Easton, The Gospel According to St. Luke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 254.

The story of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10). This special Lucan story, the most elaborate publican story in the synoptic tradition, is regarded by many as a variant of the story of the call of Levi (Lk. 5:27-32 = Mk. 2:13-17).[1] In order to place this narrative here, Luke has moved forward the story of the blind man's healing, making it a preface to Jesus' entrance into the city of Jericho rather than as marking his departure, as in Matthew and Mark.[2] Zacchaeus, we are told, was eager to see Jesus. Jesus noticed him and indicated that he was going to his house, whereupon Zacchaeus received him joyfully. All this took place while the crowd murmured because of Jesus' association with sinners such as Zacchaeus. But the encounter with Jesus caused Zacchaeus to sell half of his goods in order to give the poor and to restore fourfold anyone whom he had defrauded.[3] Jesus' reply was that salvation had that day come to Zacchaeus' household, "since he also is a son of Abraham" (19:10).

This sequence of statements is significant within the framework of Luke's theology. Jesus affirms that his own in

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[1] Beare, p. 201. Bundy, p. 412. Montefiore, II, 562. Gilmour, VIII, 320. Plummer, p. 433, notes that this is the sixth mention of tax collectors in this gospel, all favorable (3:12: 5:27; 7:29; 15:1; 18:10). The description of Zacchaeus' office, ἀρχιτελώνης, does not occur elsewhere. Creed, p. 230.

[2] Bundy, p. 411.

[3] The restitution may be related both to Jewish law (Ex. 22:1) and Roman law of *furtum manifestum*. Creed, p. 231. Gilmour, VIII, 326.

resolve to visit Zacchaeus has proved the means of his salvation, and that the ostracized taxgatherer has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham by the change of character which has taken place in him.[1] The chief tax collector, who had cut himself off from his heritage as a descendent of Abraham by his collaboration with the Romans, proved himself to be a true son of Abraham by receiving the Messiah joyfully and by bringing forth fruits worthy of a son of Abraham.

The Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection (Lk. 20:27-40 = Mk. 12:18-27 = Matt. 22:23-33). This pericope contains the only Abraham reference in the section of Luke's gospel devoted to Jesus' final ministry in Jerusalem. It is also the only pericope drawn from the Marcan tradition which contained a reference to Abraham. Matthew makes no significant changes in the Marcan account. There are, however, in Luke additions and omissions.[2] This is the only appearance of the Sadducees in Luke's gospel (though they do appear in Acts). The evangelists are generally concerned with the Sadducees only as those who deny the resurrection. In this pericope they seek to ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection by posing an extravagantly hypothetical situation involving the law of Deut. 25:5 ff.[3] They raise the question of whose wife a woman will be in the resurrection when she has had as husband seven brothers successively. The beginning of the Marcan reply: "Is this not why you err, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?" is omitted by Luke as is his conclusion; "You are quite wrong." He goes directly into a comparison between life in this age and the age of the resurrection:

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[1] William Manson, pp. 210-11. J. van Goudoever, "The Place of Israel in Luke's Gospel," Novum Testamentum, VIII (1966), 123.

[2] Not enough, however, for agreement with Knox, II, 40, that this tradition was transmitted in several forms.

[3] Matthew's version, with the addition of παρ' ὑμῖν, makes the story less hypothetical.

> The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (20:34-36).

Luke then cites the proof-text from Moses, drawn from the section entitled "The Bush"--"God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." In typical rabbinic fashion he deduces that this text indicates that God is the God of the living and not the dead. Therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be alive, thus proving the doctrine of resurrection, "for all live to him."[1]

There seems to be no reason for denying the authenticity of this passage as a tradition from Jesus' ministry, although the form in which it appears in Luke shows definite affinities with Hellenistic notions of personal immortality, such as those found in IV Macc. 7:19 and 16:25.[2] The phrase, "God of Abraham,

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[1] R. Gamaliel II argues similarly in citations in b. Sanhedrin, ch. XI, pp. 604-607. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, I, 893-95.

[2] Beare, p. 213. Gilmour, VIII, 355. Easton, p. 303. Montefiore, II, 574. Bultmann, p. 26, sees it as an expression of the theological activity of the early church. So also Bundy pp. 441-42. For criticism of this position see Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark (2nd ed.; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 481.

Isaac, and Jacob," is found outside this pericope in the New Testament only in Acts 3:13 and 7:32 (the latter quoting Ex. 3:6). When it is used in Jewish literature, however, it is nearly always for the purpose of emphasizing God's faithfulness to his promises. This faithfulness is here taken to imply the resurrection of the dead.[1] While this Marcan story fits less neatly than some other Abraham materials into the overall scheme of Luke's theology of eschatological fulfillment of the promises, it may nevertheless view immortality with the patriarchs as the ultimate fulfillment of blessing.

Peter's sermon in the Temple (Acts 3:11-26). In this second of the Petrine speeches in Acts is the first reference to Abraham in Luke's sequel to his gospel. All of the other Abraham references in Acts also occur in the speech material. Over against the earlier position of C. H. Dodd, many scholars now see these speeches primarily as Lucan compositions, expressive not so much of primitive apostolic preaching as of Lucan theology relating to his time.[2] Increasingly attention has also been given to the differences between the various speeches, while recognizing that similarities among them exist.[1] The influence of Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and Biblical historiography on Luke's composition of Acts has been noted frequently, but, as Dahl has emphasized, Luke reveals that his own conscious intention was to write history in a Biblical style or rather, to write the continuation of Biblical history. Hence Jewish models were probably more directly influential.

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[1] Johnson, VII, 522-23. F. Dreyfus, "L'Argument scripturaire de Jésus en faveur de la resurrection des morts (Marc, XII, 26-27)," *Revue Biblique*, LXVI (1966), 217, 224.

[2] C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1936). See especially Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven, tr. Mary Ling (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956); Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (10 Aufl.; "Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956); Ulrich Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* ("Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament"; Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1961); Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* ("Handbuch

In his treatment of Abraham, Luke keeps closer to the Biblical narratives and references to Abraham than does any other Christian or Jewish writer of his time.[2]

A few comments must be made on the problem of sources. Whereas the existence of Mark, and the postulation of the Q source, provide some external references for source criticism of the Gospel of Luke, the uniqueness of Acts in the New Testament canon limits the possibilities of source criticism of Acts. The poles of criticism generally range between the hypothesis of an underlying Aramaic document for portions of Acts (as in the work of C. C. Torrey) to the postulation that the author has coined

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zum Neuen Testament"; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr /Paul Siebeck/, 1963; O'Neill; R. P. C. Hanson, The Acts ("The New Clarendon Bible"; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 37-38; Williams, pp. 36-48. See also the analysis of scholarship on the speeches in acts in Daniel C. Arichea, Jr., "A Critical Analysis of the Stephen Speech in the Acts of the Apostles" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1965).

[1] Eduard Schweizer, "Concerning the Speeches in Acts," Studies in Luke-Acts, pp. 208-16. Wilckens, p. 71.

[2] Dahl, pp. 152-53. Concerning historiography see especially F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., The Beginnings of Christianity (5 vols.; London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1920-33), II, 11-17. Dibelius, pp. 150-167.

deliberate Septuagintalisms or otherwise imitated a Biblical style (as in the work of H. F. D. Sparks).[1] In the interpretation of Acts one should exercise the same care as did Luke in his composition, as expressed in the preface to his gospel, while at the same time recognizing his own creativity, his sophistication, and above all his primary theological and evangelical intent. Attempts to separate historical and theological concerns mirror twentieth-century scholarship more than a Lucan point of view. The inability to isolate sources need not deny their existence and use by Luke.

Returning to the speech of Peter in the Portico of Solomon, we note that Luke places this after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. The speech is dominated by the theme that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the fulfillment of the ancient promise to Abraham, a fulfillment which all the prophets from the time of Moses onward, had proclaimed. This is indicated particularly in the opening and closing portions of the speech.

In the beginning of the speech it is said that the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob has glorified his servant

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[1] C. C. Torrey, The Composition and Date of Acts ("Harvard Theological Studies," No. 1; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1916). H. F. D. Sparks, "The Semitisms of Acts," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s., I (1950), 16-28. See also Max Wilcox, The Semitisms of Acts (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965); Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts (2nd ed.; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1954); Munck, p. xxviii; Haenchen, p. 73. Dupont, The Sources of the Acts, p. 166, points out that it is not possible to identify any of the sources used by the author of Acts in a way which will meet widespread agreement among critics.

Jesus (3:13).[1] In the closing statement the hearers are described as the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to their fathers. This covenant promise is then quoted: "And in your seed (σπέρματι) shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (3:25). This form of the promise is a quotation of the Septuagint version of Gen. 22:18, with the exception of the substitution of φυλαί for ἔθνη. The form of the promise in Gen. 12:3 has φυλαί, but reads "in you" rather than "in your seed." While the use of "families" may have been deemed more suitable for a Jewish audience and may be a way of not anticipating the Cornelius story,[2] the choice of the Gen. 22 statement of the promise was more likely determined by the presence of σπέρματι there. Luke certainly understands this "seed" as a single descendent, Jesus, rather than as a collective.[3] In this speech Luke maintains the historical perspective that this message of salvation was for the Jews first (3:26), but at the same time he regards the promise as an indication in favor of the Gentile mission.[4]

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[1] The Western text here agrees with the LXX and the gospels in repeating θεος before each name. This phrase itself, as noted above, is relatively infrequent in the New Testament.

[2] Haenchen, p. 173. Hanson, pp. 75-76. Dahl, p. 149.

[3] Conzelmann, Die Apostelgeschichte, p. 35. This is in agreement with Paul's argument in Galatians and consistent with our interpretation of the infancy canticles.

[4] Dupont, "L'Utilisation apologétique de l'Ancien Testament dans les discours des Actes," Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia, Ser. II, Fasc. 40 (Extrait des Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 1953, t. XXVI), 295, 297. Dahl, p. 149. The differences between φυλαί and ἔθνη must not be pressed; both are inclusive terms and so understood by Luke.

Implicit in the earliest promise to Abraham is the fulfillment in the universal Christian gospel.

The Stephen speech (Acts 7:2-53). The Stephen speech is the longest of the speeches in Acts, and this length as well as the content show the importance which Luke attached to it in the presentation of this theology.[1] Of all the speeches, however, it is perhaps the most problematic to modern criticism. Its text departs from the Septuagint more extensively than the other speeches, and it is the most polemical of them all. It is placed at the first great crisis in Acts, and is really more of an attack than a defense.

The only extensive survey of the Abraham history in the Lucan writings is found here, but this survey is in itself highly selective. It includes an appearance of the God of glory to Abraham in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran; the command to depart from the land of the Chaldeans; the departure and movement to Haran. After the death of his father Abraham moved from Haran to Palestine. Though he had neither child nor material inheritance, God promised to give to him and to his seed after him, the land of his sojourn. God told him of the enslavement of his seed, and of their coming out of slavery to "worship me in this place." God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision, he became the father of Isaac, and he circumcised his son on the eighth day. Later (7:15-16) Jacob and also the fathers were laid in the tomb which Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. The time preceding the Exodus is described as the time of the drawing near of the promise which God had granted to Abraham (7:17). In the recounting of the story of Moses at the burning bush, the voice of the Lord again is quoted: "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob" (7:32). In the matters of the traditional appearance of God to Abraham, the death of Terah, and the burial place of the eleven sons of Jacob, Luke here follows traditions known in such Hellenistic Jewish writings as Josephus and Philo rather than the Septuagint text as we know it.[1] It is possible, of course, that he is citing from memory or simply recalling popular Hellenistic Jewish tradition.[1]

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[1] Gustav Stählin, Die Apostelgeschichte (10 Aufl.; "Das Neue Testament Deutsch"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962), p. 111.

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[1] a. The traditional place of God's appearance to Abraham is Haran and not Ur. Philo and Josephus support Ur; and this is the assumption in Gen. 15:7 and Neh. 9:7.

b. According to the traditional text Terah was alive when Abraham left Haran because in Gen. 11:26 he was 70 years old at Abraham's birth, in Gen. 11:32 he lived to be 205, and in Gen. 12:4 Abraham was 75 when he left Haran. Philo gives Terah's age at Gen. 11:32 as 145. The reading in Acts is a natural assumption in view of Gen. 11:32 unless one generally engages in careful genealogical mathematics.

c. In the Old Testament Jacob was buried at Hebron (Gen. 50:13) and Joseph at Shechem (Jos. 24:32). Josephus and Jubilees relate the burial of Jacob's sons (except Joseph) at Hebron, not Shechem. Luke may have telescoped a number of stories or may be quoting from memory here rather than citing directly.

On these problems see especially Foakes-Jackson and Lake, IV, 34-39. Wilcox, The Semitisms of Acts, passim, notes a number of places where the readings in Acts agree with Samaritan readings and the targums. Concerning the reading in 7:32 see p. 254, note 1. The reading in 7:6 reflects Gen. 15:3 rather than Ex. 12:40. Dahl, pp. 142-43, points out that this speech contains a number of Septuagintal phrases drawn from outside the Abraham stories in the Pentateuch.

One of the more significant modifications of Old Testament quotations is in 7:7. The text of Gen. 15:14 which is quoted reads: "But afterwards they shall come out hither with much baggage (ἀποσκευῆς)." Instead of this reading Luke substitutes a phrase taken from Ex. 3:12: "And you shall worship God upon this mountain." Thus the goal is neither worship at Sinai (in this speech the mountain is obviously Mt. Zion) nor the land itself, but the worship of God in the land of the promise.[2] As Dahl points out, this language is very close to that of the Benedictus which represents the final goal of messianic redemption as worship in holiness and righteousness.[3]

Thus we see that the summary of the Abraham story in the Stephen speech is selective. Moreover, Luke omits the experiences in Egypt, the Abraham-Lot stories, the story of Hagar and Ishmael, the battle of the kings and the meeting with Melchizedek. While Abraham's faith is implied (7:5), it is not emphasized, and significantly the story of the sacrifice of Isaac receives no notice at all. There is no opposition to the practice of circumcision in this speech since it provides a point of historical continuity and is not tied to the land.[4]

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[1] In 7:16 the Western text reads τοῦ Συχέμ instead of ἐν Συχέμ , making this a person rather than a place, though this reverses the father-son relationship between Shechem and Hamor. In 7:17 the Western text has ἐπηγγείλατο instead of ὡμολόγησεν .

[2] Dahl, pp. 144-45.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 146-47.

[4] Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 46. Munck, p. 63.

Within the Abraham material which Luke includes his focus remains upon the promise made to the fathers. In the speech as a whole he insists on the absence of a temple or a fixed land in the days of the patriarchs, and upon the general tendency of Israel to go against its divinely appointed leaders and guides, and he draws the parallel between the Jews' treatment of these leaders in times past and the Jewish leaders' treatment of Jesus.[1] This speech which leads to Stephen's martyrdom and the dispersion of the church into the world is used by Luke to maintain that the death of Stephen is not a **momentary** error in judgment. Rather it is a paradigm of a spiritual attitude revealed in Israel's whole history, and it gives Luke a dramatic opportunity to lay the fault for failure to find salvation upon the Jews themselves, more especially upon their leaders.[2] The extremely polemical nature of this speech is undoubtedly due to the fact that Luke here represents Stephen as addressing precisely those Jewish leaders who elsewhere in Acts are singled out for their responsibility in the crucifixion.[3]

Whatever may be the relationship of this speech to historical events in the primitive church, and whatever the identification of the Hellenists, by using these traditions

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[1] Foakes-Jackson and Lake, IV, 70.

[2] Haenchen, p. 247. Dibelius, p. 175.

[3] John T. Townsend, "The Speeches in Acts," Anglican Theological Review, XLII (1960), 159.

Luke maintains that the ancient promise has been fulfilled in "the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered," and that the worship of the Christians of his own day, apart from the Jewish temple, is consistent with the pure pattern of Heilsgeschichte. The pattern of Israel's disobedience has its place within the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham according to its broadest possible terms.

Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch and his defense before Agrippa II (Acts 13:16-41 and 26:2-29). The sermon of Paul before the Diaspora synagogue in Pisidian Antioch is presented in a form similar to that of the Stephen speech in that a brief outline of Heilsgeschichte replaces the quotation from scripture found in other speeches.[1] However, after the mention of the election of the fathers (13:17), Luke passes over the patriarchal period and the life of Moses (except for mention of the Exodus and wilderness wandering) to mention the conquest, the judges, Saul, and David, and then moves to John the Baptist and Jesus.[2] Luke here refers to the sins of the Jews only in a most general way and then lays the blame on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.[3] There is a clear difference between the speeches of Stephen and Paul in terms of the different audiences addressed.

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[1] Schweizer, p. 210.

[2] Conzelmann, Die Apostelgeschichte, p. 75, and Haenchen, p. 364, suggest that the reason is that this material was already handled in the Stephen speech.

[3] Marcel Simon, St. Stephen and the Hellenists (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958), pp. 41-42. Stahlin, p. 181. O'Neill, p. 82.

Twice in the speech the audience is addressed directly: "Men of Israel, and you that fear God" (13:16), and "Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you that fear God" (13:26). To this mixed group of Jews and God-fearers (certainly to be understood as Gentiles), Paul proclaims the fulfillment of the promise made to the fathers (13:32-33), "the message of this salvation" (13:26).[1] The rejection of the message by most of the Jews, however, leads to a result similar to that following Stephen's martyrdom:

> Since you thrust it (the word of God) from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles (13:47).

At this point Luke significantly places the quotation from Is. 49:6 concerning universal salvation.

The final reference to the Abraham stories comes in the speech before Herod Agrippa II. Luke constructs "the fifth, final, elaborate, and climactic trial scene with a speech."[2] The simplicity of Paul's defense is extremely effective:

> And now I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers . . . (26:6).

While, to be sure, the apostle refers here to resurrection hope of the Jews, it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead which is at issue and it is this which validates his messianic role.[3] In a summary fashion this statement gives

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[1] Munck, p. 123. Contra Macgregor, IX, 134. See also Foakes-Jackson and Lake, IV, 153.

[2] Paul Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVII (1968), 7.

[3] Macgregor, IX, 324.

Luke's understanding of the Christian faith as nothing more or less than the fulfillment of the ancient promises sworn to the fathers, "nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass" (26:22). This fulfillment includes not only the death and resurrection of the messiah, but also the proclamation "both to the people and to the Gentiles" (26:23).

The Lucan interpretation of Abraham is clearly centered on the gracious promise of God to Abraham that in his seed all the world would be blessed. From the first statements in the Magnificat and the Benedictus to Paul's defense before Agrippa this is the theme which unifies the author's treatment of Abraham. For Luke the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and the subsequent establishment of the church, which included both Jews and Gentiles, were the fulfillment of the ancient promise.

In his treatment of the Abraham tradition Luke interprets the "seed" of Abraham in two ways. Jesus is for him the seed of Abraham designated in the ancient promise. It is ultimately this seed through whom the world is blessed (as indicated particularly in the infancy narratives and in Peter's speech). At the same time Luke recognizes the validity of the historical place of the Jewish people as the descendents of Abraham. This, however, is for him a physical relationship which is not ultimate and which can be voided by disobedience to God's word, to the Law and the Prophets. This is shown clearly in the John the

Baptist pericope, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and, in a reverse fashion, in the Zacchaeus story.

For Luke the eschatological fulfillment of the promise is also a freeing of God's people from their enemies. Thus the loosing of a woman from Satanic bondage overrides the Sabbath regulations. The passages which deal with the end can be seen as part of this motif of fulfillment, God's deliverance of man from the ultimate enemy, death without hope. For Luke, the fulfillment of the promise extends to eternal life for the just described as a participation in the messianic banquet, and as rest in the bosom of Abraham.

There is thus a consistency and singleness of theological concern in Luke's treatment of the Abraham tradition. Conspicuously absent are any interests in Abraham's character or even in his faith (apart from fleeting references to these in the Stephen speech). Both in the symbolical or midrashic overview in the infancy narratives, and in the explicit references throughout his gospel and Acts, Luke is concerned simply to present the Christian proclamation as the fulfillment of God's ancient promise of grace, a fulfillment to which the entire scriptures bear witness.

The Abraham Tradition in the Fourth Gospel

No New Testament document remains more elusive with respect to its origin, primary purpose, theological provenance, etc., than the Fourth Gospel. Any careful survey of the history of Johannine scholarship confirms this observation.[1] It is a document which combines the simplicity and profundity of the evangelist's mind and experience in such a way that most attempts to restate his thought in a general way fail to do justice to it.[2] One is impressed with the extreme care with which this gospel was written, a care extending to the smallest detail, in which also is found subtlety and elusiveness.[3]

The complexities of the critical questions concerning this gospel's background cannot be discussed here. Certain general presuppositions must simply be stated. It is assumed that the gospel was written around 100 A.D. in Syria or Asia. The author is unknown, but he seems to have had at his disposal reliable early tradition which he utilized freely to express his own theological concerns and convictions.[4] There is in recent scholarship an increasing tendency to regard the Fourth Gospel as reflecting a primitive tradition, some points at least parallel to that from which the synoptic writers drew.[1] Over against elaborate redactional theories, the essential unity of the gospel in its present form is assumed.[2]

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[1] See W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, rev. by C. K. Barrett (London: The Epworth Press, 1955). Also Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, I-XII ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), pp. xxi-cxlvi.

[2] James L. Price, "The Search for the Theology of the Fourth Evangelist," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XXXV (1967), 15.

[3] R. H. Lightfoot, St. John's Gospel, ed. C. F. Evans (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 349.

[4] See Kümmel, pp. 134-75. Brown, pp. lxvii-civ. C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London. S. P. C. K., 1955), pp. 3-119.

The hypothesis that the gospel is addressed primarily to a Christian community, existing in tension with the Judaism of the Jamnia period (cf. 16:2) is strongly supported from internal evidence.[3] The theory of an Aramaic original of this gospel has been generally abandoned.[4] At the same time the basically Jewish mentality of the author must be given full weight in any attempts at interpretation.[5] While this is not to deny the relationship of John's thought to Hellenistic thought, it is to emphasize the obvious affinities with rabbinic

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[1] Kümmel, pp. 144, 151. Barrett, pp. 15, 276. Brown, p. xlvi.

[2] Perhaps the most elaborate theory of redaction is that of Rudolf Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes (13 Aufl.; "Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953). For criticism of this view see especially Dwight Moody Smith, Jr., The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel ("Yale Publications in Religion," No. 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

[3] Brown, pp. lxxiv-lxxv.

[4] For this theory see especially Charles F. Burney, The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922). Aramaisms are, however, often detected.

[5] Kümmel, p. 155. Note, e. g., the use of "Messias" only in this gospel, the frequent use of "Rabbi." Further in ch. 7 the argument concerning healing on the Sabbath uses the analogy of circumcision overriding the Sabbath law rather than the lifting up of an ox or ass as in the synoptics.

Judaism and other expressions of Palestinian Jewish piety. C. H. Dodd, pointing to the highly complex unity of these two strains in the thought of the evangelist has concluded that the Jewish strain "implies some degree of Jewish learning."[1] C. K. Barrett has likewise suggested that John (or the writers of his sources) was familiar with the oral teaching which later crystallized in the Mishnah, Talmuds, and Midrashim.[2] This exegetical tradition is particularly pertinent to the understanding of John's treatment of the Abraham tradition.

The following sections will investigate, first, the dialogue in John 8:31-59, the only part of the Fourth Gospel to make explicit mention of Abraham; and, second, the relationship of the lamb of God symbolism to the Abraham-Isaac traditions within Judaism.

The dialogue concerning the Son of God and the children of Abraham (8:31-59). This dialogue, which is addressed to τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους,[3] is located by the evangelist at the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. It follows Jesus' teaching on water and light and his announcement of his going away. The dialogue moves, in a scene of everheightening conflict, from the general statements of Jesus concerning abiding in his word to the climatic assertion, "Before Abraham was born, I am." The motif which sustains the argument throughout, however, is the reference to Abraham.

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[1] C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1963), p. 15. Most recent Johannine scholarship discusses the possible affinities with Qumran thought. These are pertinent to the passages under consideration here only in a general way.

[2] Barrett, St. John, pp. 27-28. *Contra* Kümmel, p. 155.

[3] See below, pp. 272 ff.

In the introductory section the conflict is joined. Jesus says that those who continue in his word are truly his disciples. They will know the truth, and the truth will make them free. According to John's customary usage, truth in this instance is specifically divine truth communicated through revelation,[1] and man's knowledge of this truth implies obedience. The antagonists then reply that they are already free. As σπέρμα of Abraham they have never been in bondage. Rudolf Bultmann points out that the Jews rightly understand the words of Jesus to refer to spiritual freedom, but they mistakenly think of this as their present possession rather than as an eschatogical gift through the Son.[2]

The next stage of the argument moves to an explicit definition of the freedom and slavery which have been introduced as subjects for discussion. The slavery in question is slavery to sin; and freedom is defined as freedom from sin. It may well be, as Hugo Odeberg suggests, that there is here an allusion to the rabbinic doctrine of the evil *yetzer*.[3] Jesus contrasts the slave who does not abide in the house forever with the Son who abides forever. Since the matter of σπέρμα of Abraham has been introduced, it seems most probable that John is here drawing upon the popular Jewish interpretation of the Isaac-Ishmael stories (cf. Gal. 4:20 ff., esp. 4:29 which clearly goes beyond the Genesis story).[1] It has already been pointed out that there was an increasing tendency in midrashic literature to villify Ishmael as idolator, obscene person, murderer, etc. John makes clear that Son here refers only to Christ (consistent with his use reserving υἱος for Jesus and using τέκνα for all others). Jesus admits that in a physical sense the Jews are σπέρμα of Abraham, but makes nothing of this (while they are σπέρμα in vs. 33, they are not τέκνα in vs. 39). Indeed their murderous designs against the Son of God prove that they have no real relationship to Abraham.[2] They seek to kill him because his word "has no free course" in them.[3] And this word is a reflection of what he has seen with the Father--just as they do what they have heard from their (real) father.

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[1] Alfred Wikenhauser, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (3 Aufl.; "Regensburger Neues Testament"; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1961), p. 182. Cf. John 17:17.

[2] Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 335.

[3] Hugo Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel, Interpreted in Its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious Currents in Palestine and the Hellenistic Oriental World* (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells Boktryckeri A. B., 1929) p. 301.

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[1] R. H. Strachen, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Significance and Environment* (3rd ed.; London: Student Christian Movement Press, Ltd., 1941), p. 213. Wikenhauser, p. 178. Barrett, *St. John*, p. 286. J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John,* ed. A. H. McNeile (2 vols.; "The International Critical Commentary"; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), II, 307. There is no need to postulate with Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 380-382, an independent parable; or with Brown, p. 355, an independent insertion.

[2] Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. Francis N. Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 341.

[3] Vs. 37, χωρεῖ, with Wilbert F. Howard, "The Gospel According to St. John: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), VIII, 602-603.

The third stage of the dialogue begins with the repetition by the Jews of the statement that Abraham is their father. Jesus' reply is that if this were really true their actions would be like those of Abraham.[1] The reference is clearly not to the works of Abraham in general, but specifically to his gracious reception of the heavenly messengers (Gen. 18). This was a story which had received considerable reflection in rabbinic thought, even to the extent of becoming a kind of paradigm for the merits which were rewarded at the time of the Exodus. The references to this tradition in Heb. 13:2 and I Clem. 10:37 show the significance which some Christian circles also attached to it. The Jews' intent to kill the one sent by God is not Abrahamic, but rather reveals the real parentage of the Jews. Throughout this discussion, of course, John assumes that an identity of character exists between fathers and children. At this point John represents the Jews as grasping the implication of the words of Jesus, for they move from their claim that Abraham is their father to a more exalted claim that God is their father.

As C. K. Barrett suggests, the thought moves to God's fatherhood because at this point descent from Abraham is a false statement concerning the Jews and an inadequate way to describe Jesus.[1] Perhaps with a slander (emphatic ἡμεῖς) respecting Jesus' supposed origins, the Jews protest their pure spiritual heredity: "We were not born of fornication; but have one Father, even God" (8:41). The term, "fornication," perhaps includes a theological reference to idolatry or false worship, as frequently is the case in the Old Testament.[2] But, as Edwyn Hoskyns points out, there is a genuine irony in this statement, since in fact the Jews, while physically descended from one father, actually do the works of another, and are consequently illegitimate.[3]

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[1] Barrett, St. John, pp. 287-88 indicates that the weight of manuscript evidence suggests, "If you were . . . you would do." The conditional is accepted also by Hoskyns, p. 342. The imperative is suggested by Bernard, II, 310, and Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 331.

At this point John has reached the state of absolute contrasts, which is typical of his thought. The two fathers really involved in the debate are God and the devil.[4] The Jews are not children of God since they do not love him whom God has sent. Their action shows that their father is the devil, a murderer, a liar, and the father of the lie.[5] This combination of murder and lying is a reference to the Fall of Adam (cf.

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[1] Barrett, *St. John,* p. 287.

[2] Bernard, II, 312. Odeberg, p. 302. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John* (London: Duckworth, 1943), p. 89.

[3] Hoskyns, p. 342.

[4] The translation, "of the father of the devil," is possible, but not likely. Howard, "The Gospel According to St. John," VIII, 605. Barrett, *St. John,* p. 289. Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 241, takes the opposite point of view which is more congenial with his gnostic postulates.

[5] Thus πατὴρ αὐτοῦ (vs. 44); cf. the role of Belial in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

contrast in 8:51), rather than an allusion to the murder of Abel by Cain.[1] The contrast is absolute: Jesus, who comes from God, cannot be convicted of sin; the Jews cannot hear him with understanding, but instead seek to kill him because they are of the devil.

The final stage of the dialogue begins with accusations that Jesus is a Samaritan (half-breed or heretic?) and a demoniac. It is only the last charge, one encountered often in the synoptic tradition, that is answered. His words are not demonic, but honor and glorify God, who will judge between Jesus and his adversaries. And whoever keeps Jesus' words will never see death. This is taken as a claim by Jesus that he is greater than Abraham and the prophets who died (cf. 4:12). The reply to the charge is twofold: Abraham's rejoicing to see Jesus' day, and the final statement of the eternal existence of the Son.

The rejoicing of Abraham to see the day of Jesus has been variously interpreted. The most probable reference is to the fairly widespread tradition of Abraham's apocalyptic visions. In a number of documents already cited Gen. 15 was interpreted as a vision of the successive ages of history leading up to the end. It is the arrival of the messianic day which Abraham saw and which caused Abraham's rejoicing.[1] This statement by John is consistent with his practice of making the Old Testament figures witnesses to the Christ. In 12:41 Isaiah saw his glory; and in 5:46 Moses wrote of him. The Jews ridicule the possibility that such a young man could have seen Abraham.[2]

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[1] Bernard, II, 314. Hoskyns, p. 343. Lightfoot, p. 197. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: James Clark and Company, Ltd., 1958), p. 137. Barrett, *St. John*, p. 289. *Contra* Nils A. Dahl, "Der Erstgeborene Satans und der Vater des Teufels (Polyk 7:1 und Joh 8:44), *Apophoreta* (Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen), ed. W. Eltester and F. H. Kettler ("Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche," XXX; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), *passim*; E. M. Sidebottom, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel* (London: S. P. C. K., 1961), p. 95; Brown, p. 358.

The dialogue then reaches its climax in the statement: "Before Abraham was born, I am." Here the Son, who continues forever, speaks as the eternal Logos who was from the beginning. Absolute existence is thereby contrasted with that existence which is limited (cf. Ps. 90:2). "I am" is an Old Testament revelation formula which in the Septuagint always translates the Hebrew אני הוא.[3] It is clearly understood by John as a statement of the divine name (cf. 18:4-6). In the Fourth Gospel Yahweh gives his own name to Jesus (17:11), so complete is the union between Father and Son.[4] Thus the entire dialogue climaxes not on the identification of the Jews, but of Jesus. In speaking "I am" Jesus, however, is consistent with the statements in the rest of the dialogue, i.e., the focus is on the revelation of God. Jesus speaks only as the revelation of God. As Heinrich Zimmermann says: "Das ἐγὼ εἰμί ist die Offenbarung des Vaters, aber in seinen Namen is Jesus eingeschlossen."[1]

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[1] Hoskyns, p. 348. Some see a possible reference to the rejoicing at Isaac's birth. Howard, "The Gospel According to St. John," VIII, 609. Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 247, disregards the tense of the verb and relates it to a present joy of Abraham.

[2] Vs. 57 with the Nestle text (thus Barrett, *St. John*, p. 292). *Contra* Bernard, II, 321; Hoskyns, p. 348.

[3] Heinrich Zimmermann, "Das absolute ἐγώ εἰμι als die neutestamentliche Offenbarungsformel," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, n.f.,IV (1960), 64-65.

[4] Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953), p. 95. See Brown, Appendix IV, pp. 533-38.

The relationship of this dialogue to the Q tradition of the preaching of John the Baptist, noted already in this chapter, has been recognized.[2] Whether the Fourth Gospel reflects a tradition which ascribed words to Jesus which the synoptics ascribed to John the Baptist, or whether the author of the Fourth Gospel makes the modification, the relationship is close. The description, "offspring of vipers" becomes absolute in John 8. The focus on doing the works of righteousness is present in both, but consistent with the Fourth Gospel as a whole, the Christological emphasis is paramount. The work required of men in John 8 is the reception of the one God has sent to them.

A number of scholars believe that the *Sitz im Leben* of this dialogue is the controversy between Jews and Christians in the period in which the evangelist wrote.[1] Another possibility has been suggested by R. H. Strachen, that some actual controversy of Jesus with Jewish opponents has been transposed into a new key, more appropriate to the later controversies between Christians and Jews or between Christians and a Judaizing section within the church.[2] This latter possibility has been explored more recently by C. H. Dodd. He suggests in a convincing manner that the description of Jesus' opponents in 8:31 is a technical term for Jewish Christians, pointing to the almost identical language in Acts 15:5 and 21:20:

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[1] Zimmermann, 270-71. He discusses and criticizes the earlier work of Eduard Schweizer, *Ego Eimi* ("Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten and Neuen Testaments"; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1939).

[2] Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 331. He notes that the early Christian tradition did not always distinguish sharply between the words of Jesus and John the Baptist (cf. Mk. 1:1; Matt. 3:7; 23:33).

> Il est donc probable que pour des lecteurs du quatrième évangile au courant de la de l'eglise de leur temps les "Juifs croyants" de 8:30-31 evoquaient des convertis juifs dans l'Eglise.[3]

He suggests that it is not necessary to press too rigidly the usual distinction between πιστεύειν εἰς αὐτόν and πιστεύειν αὐτῷ, and supports his thesis further by pointing to the similarity in thought between this chapter and the argument in Galatians.[4] At the same time John's independence of thought is clear in his treatment of those who place their confidence in their Jewish heritage rather than in the Son. John is not concerned with circumcision or the permanence of the law, but simply with abiding in the teaching of Christ; and unlike Paul, he speaks of doing the works of Abraham as the really important matter.[1]

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[1] Macgregor, The Gospel of John ("The Moffatt New Testament Commentary"; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1929), p. 218. Barrett, St. John, p. 276.

[2] Strachen, p. 211.

[3] Dodd, "A l'arrière-plan d'un dialogue Johannique," Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses, XXXVII (1957), 7-8.

[4] Ibid., 6-7, 9-10.

While the precise *Sitz-im-Leben* of this dialogue cannot be determined, this is not necessary in order to ascertain John's purpose throughout. His major teaching is Christological. He focuses on the nature and function of the Son and makes Abraham a witness to him. Sonship to God is what is ultimate; and the Son of God has been sent so that those who abide in his word may have freedom from slavery to sin. Descent from Abraham is at most a matter of secondary value; the lasting significance of Abraham's role is that he bears witness to the Christ and serves as a paradigm for his σπέρμα in receiving the last as well as the first of God's messengers--the Son of the Father.

The Lamb of God and the Abraham-Isaac Tradition. Perhaps nowhere is the elusiveness of the thought of the Fourth Evangelist more problematic than in his use of the phrase: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (1:29; cf. 1:36). Scholars have variously seen in this an allusion to the paschal sacrifice, the apocalyptic ram, the tamid offering, the Servant of Yahweh of Is. 53, or in one or another combination of these.[1] While the intricacies of scholarship on this problem cannot be fully reported here, the question must be explored whether the interpretation of the Abraham tradition in Jewish literature may not provide important insight into the evangelist's thought, and be given considerable weight in interpretation.

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[1] Dodd, "A l'arrière-plan," 10, 12.

Before summarizing the various possibilities for the interpretation of this symbol, certain aspects of the evangelist's thought should be emphasized. John is clearly interested in the Jewish cult, as seen in his frequent references to the feasts.[2] He is further concerned to present Jesus as the fulfillment of the Jewish cult (cf. especially 2:13-22; 4:16-26). Moreover his interest in Moses, in the Exodus and the wilderness wandering is obvious (3:14-15 and ch. 6). Finally John employs patriarchal traditions to show their fulfillment in Christ (8:31-59; 4:12 ff.). While this reference to the patriarchal traditions is not always explicit, there seem to be also implicit allusions, e.g., in the Nathaniel story with its reference to Jacob (1:51), when Jesus speaks of the ascending and descending of angels upon the Son of Man.

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[1] For survey of scholarship see especially Eric E. May, Ecce Agnus Dei! ("The Catholic University of America Studies in Sacred Theology," second series, no. 5; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947). Stephen Virgulin, "Recent Discussion of the Title 'Lamb of God,'" Scripture, XIII (1961), 74-80. Barrett, "The Lamb of God," New Testament Studies, I (1954-55), 210-18. Feliks Gryglewicz, "Das Lamm Gottes," New Testament Studies, XIII (1966-67), 133-46. F. M. Braun, Jean le Théologien (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1959-64), I, 69-86.

[2] The attempt of Aileen Guilding, The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960), to show relationships to the Jewish lectionary is far too intricate to be convincing.

The language of the verses which designate Jesus as the Lamb of God is itself problematic. While Jesus is only here in the New Testament directly called ἀμνός , he is described as being like an ἀμνός in Acts 8:32 and I Pet. 1:19. The other Johannine document which uses the symbolism of a lamb for the Christ, the Revelation, uses ἀρνίον . Unfortunately for the proponents of two major theories concerning the Old Testament background for the Johannine phrase--Ex. 12, the paschal sacrifice; and Is. 53, the Servant--neither of the passages is a perfect linguistic parallel. Ex. 12 uses πρόβατον and in Is. 53 an ἀμνός is sheared but the animal slaughtered is a πρόβατον (though the terms appear in a kind of loose parallelism).

The verb αἴρειν which is used here is not found in Is. 53, which uses (53:12) ἀνήνεγκεν (and φέρει in 53:4); and in the Old Testament the paschal offering is not basically expiatory. In the Old Testament, however, αἴρειν translates no less than 28 different Hebrew roots, though in all except about 40 cases out of 200 it translates נשא .[1] It is frequently used in the Old Testament with reference to sins.[2] In the New Testament it can have the meaning either of bearing (as e.g., one's cross in Mk. 8:34) or removing (John 2:16). Perhaps one should not press the distinction between "take away" and "bear" in view of John's predilection for double meanings.[1]

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[1] May, p. 12.

[2] Hoskyns, p. 176, cites LXX I Sam. 15:25; 25:28; Ex. 28:38; 34:7; Lev. 10:17.

It is necessary that a brief assessment be made of the evidence for the various traditions which may inform John's interpretation of the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin.

The apocalyptic Lamb. The major recent exponent of this view is C. H. Dodd.[2] Based on the book of Enoch primarily, and on the fact that according to John 1:41, Jesus is almost immediately designated Messiah, Dodd sees the title simply as an equivalent to King of Israel, the victorious warrior leader of the flock. Raymond Brown offers some support for this view in conjecturing that John the Baptist may have expected a conquering lamb, although Brown believes that the Fourth Evangelist has transformed the image if this was the Baptist's original meaning.[3] Dodd's view has been criticized by C. K. Barrett because it ignores the paschal allusions elsewhere in the gospel and, more immediately, does not do justice to the clause, "who takes away the sin of the world."[1] It should be noted also that in the Revelation the image of the apocalyptic lamb incorporates sacrificial motifs. Barrett points out, at the same time, that while Dodd's view is in error it has the merit of sharpening one's sight to perceive the eschatological emphasis of the title, for the Lamb of God in the Fourth Gospel does describe Jesus in his eschatological activity.[2]

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[1] Gryglewicz, 146. F. W. Gingrich, "Ambiguity of Word Meaning in John's Gospel," Classical Weekly, XXXVII (1943-44), 77.

[2] Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 231-32, 236-38.

[3] Brown, "Three Quotations from John the Baptist in the Gospel of John," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXII (1960), 296.

The paschal Lamb. It has been noted that references to the Passover occur ten times in this gospel, seven of which refer to the Passover when the Lord died.[3] Supporting the designation of Jesus as passover lamb in this gospel is its dating of the crucifixion. The death of Jesus coincides with the slaughter of the passover lambs. Further there is the quotation in John 19:36, which appears on textual evidence to have more in common with Ex. 12:46 and Nu. 9:12 than with another passage frequently cited, Ps. 33:21 (LXX).[4] John says that the things done to Jesus by the soldiers were in order that "the scriptures might be fulfilled." There is also the mention in 19:29 of hyssop being reached to Jesus' lips, an act under these circumstances having no practical value. A late manuscript has the variant, ὑσσῷ , "lance, javelin," but this is not weighty evidence, so that hyssop is probably another paschal allusion by John.[1] Another possible indication pointing to the sacrificial death as the focus of the meaning of the term is the use by the crowd in 19:15 of the same verb as in 1:29, ἆρον, ἆρον . While it is often noted that the paschal lamb in the Old Testament was not primarily piacular, in ancient Jewish thought as we have noted, its redemptive efficacy was explicitly taught.[2]

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[1] Barrett, "The Lamb of God," 210-11. Cf. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 220, where he says that the idea of expiation is conspicuously absent from the Fourth Gospel; and p. 110, where he says that there is not the slightest evidence that John attached significance to the dating of Jesus' death.

[2] Barrett, "The Lamb of God," 211.

[3] Lightfoot, p. 349. Leon Morris, The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries (London: The Tyndale Press, 1964), p. 67.

[4] Edwin D. Freed, Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John ("Supplements to Novum Testamentum," XI; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 113. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 44, insists that the citation is from the psalm.

Closely related to this theory that the Lamb of God in John refers to the paschal sacrifice is the view of some scholars that John has in mind the daily offering, the tamid, possibly in combination with other symbolism.[3]

The Servant of Is. 53. Because of the quite early appropriation of Is. 53 in Christian theology some scholars see this passage as the primary reference in John 1:29. Joachim Jeremias is the principal exponent of a theory, earlier proposed by Burney, that behind ἀμνός is an Aramaic טליא which could have a double meaning.[1] But, as Bultmann points out, it is significant that for עבד the prophetic targums use עבדא rather than טליא.[2] Further even if such were the case, one must still ask why "servant" became "lamb" in Greek.[3] While the Isaiah passage may be a part of the influence on this terminology, it cannot be taken as a direct proof-text for the evangelist's thought here.

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[1] Lightfoot, p. 310. Barrett, *St. John*, p. 460. Strachen, p. 320, accepts it as a misreading.

[2] See Bernard, I, 44. M. E. Boismard, "Le Christ-Agneau, Rédempteur des hommes," *Lumiere et vie*, XXXVI (1958), 96.

[3] D. A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1930), p. 47. Bultmann, *Johannes*, pp. 66-67. Hoskyns, p. 176. Westcott, p. 20.

Barrett has suggested that many of these Biblical allusions had been brought together in the Christian eucharist and that this recurring event became the crucible in which the notions of passover, death of Jesus, and expiation were combined. He suggests that it was by way of the *Christian* passover that Is. 53 was brought into connection with John 1:29.[4] As early as the time of Paul in Christian confessions Christ was described as "our Passover" (I Cor. 5:7). As soon as this connection was made all of the various meanings of the death of Christ could be incorporated into the Christian understanding of Passover.[1]

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[1] Joachim Jeremias, "ἀμνός, ἀρήν, ἀρνίον," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), I, 339. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, tr. Shirley C. Gutherie and Charles A. M. Hall (rev. ed.; "The New Testament Library"; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 67. May, p. 92.

[2] Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 67. *The Targum of Isaiah*, ed. and tr. J. F. Stenning (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 178-81, reads אימרא and רחלא on Is. 53:7.

[3] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, I ("Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament"; Freiburg: Herder, 1965), p. 286.

[4] Barrett, "The Lamb of God," 218.

The question should be asked, however, whether this kind of merging of traditions had not occurred beforehand in Jewish thought. We have pointed out how already in intertestamental Jewish literature, particularly in rabbinic literature, great value was given to the efficacy of Isaac's sacrifice. We have noted further how the interpretation of Gen. 22 increasingly focused on Isaac and his willingness to sacrifice himself. We have noted the concern with the merits of Isaac's sacrifice. We have suggested that the Is. 53 passage was probably brought quite early into connection with Gen. 22 as a background for this kind of exegesis. We have noted also the dating on Passover of a number of events in the Abraham-Isaac stories. Further it has been noted that in the targum on Lev. 22 concerning animals for ordinary sacrifices the lamb is related specifically to Isaac and his sacrifice. The locating of the sacrifice of Isaac on Mt. Zion had for many years been firmly entrenched in Jewish tradition.

Given the interest of John in the patriarchs, his explicit mention of Abraham and Jacob, and his allusion to Jacob's dream at Bethel without mentioning the patriarch's name, it is reasonable to expect either open or veiled allusions to Isaac in this gospel.[1] There are a number of aspects of John's presentation of Jesus which suggest an underlying Isaac symbolism (though certainly with the understanding that Jesus is greater than Isaac). There are the date and place of Christ's death and, significantly, the omission of any mention of the carrying of the cross by Simon of Cyrene (reported in all three synoptics). Jesus carries the wood of his sacrifice.[2] With respect to his death, Jesus' freedom from compulsion is emphasized, his ready willingness to die. No one takes his life from him, he lays it down willingly.

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[1] Schnackenburg, p. 287. Bultmann, _Johannes_, p. 67, suggests also that the term may perhaps have come from the Christian liturgy and that it was used without reflection on its original meaning in such a way as to give rise to many associations.

The interpretation of the dialogue in ch. 8 has shown John's awareness of rabbinic and other Palestinian Jewish tradition, confirming the opinions of Dodd and Barrett cited earlier. Because of the prominence of Isaac in Palestinian Jewish thought one may conclude that from this tradition also John's presentation of Jesus as Lamb of God is in part derived.[3]

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[1] Among those who point to such are Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," The Journal of Theological Studies XLVIII (1947), 156. Bernard, I, 118. Braun, I, 179-80. R. le Déaut, "La presentation targumique du sacrifice d'Isaac et la soteriologie Paulinienne," Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus (2 vols.; "Analecta Biblica," 17-18; Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), II, 556. Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p. 228. R. V. G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1954), p. 59.

[2] See Strachen, p. 318.

[3] Déaut, p. 570, suggests a relationship between Gen. 22 and John 3:16.

This is not to suggest that the Isaac haggadah provided the single ingredient in this symbolism, but only that it may supply a missing link between the Old Testament and the Fourth Gospel. Many of the problems encountered in the search for the origin of the lamb symbolism can be solved by recognizing the merging of motifs around the figure of Isaac within the Jewish community. Jesus then fulfills the cult and the promise as he fulfills the Isaac typology.

As Barrett has suggested, in the lamb-of-God saying John has carefully chosen an image which, like others he uses, is many-sided. He concentrates in a single epigrammatic utterance a number of Christological ideas thus giving powerful expression to them in a form intelligible to the church of his own time.[1]

The Johannine use of the Abraham tradition appears then to be drawn largely from those traditions which had developed particularly in Palestine. The cultic and apocalyptic notions of the Palestinian communities are reflected here. In his confrontation with Judaism, perhaps both within and outside his own church, John's presentation of his profound Christology shows considerable affinity with his opponent's framework of thought. In the instances we have examined, however, he exploits this Jewish tradition to express some of his central Christological concerns. For him, Jewish history, cult, and life are fulfilled in the Son of God who, having been sent from the Father with whom he eternally existed, reveals the Father as he dies for the sin of the world.

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[1] Barrett, "The Lamb of God," 217-18.

Conclusion

There is a significant interest in the Abraham tradition in the writings of Luke and in the Fourth Gospel. For these writers the central theological reality is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their interest in Abraham lies, therefore, in the relationship of the Christian gospel to the patriarchal tradition. Each of these writers focuses upon some parts of the Abraham tradition which have found fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Luke interprets the coming of Jesus the Christ as the fulfillment of the ancient promise that in the seed of Abraham all the world would be blessed. Reflecting in part Hellenistic Jewish exegetical methodology Luke interprets this fulfillment of the promise in the broadest terms. It reaches from the Jews, who are physically descended from Abraham, to the Gentiles who are incorporated into the new Israel of the Christian church, and it reaches from present joy of those who know the Messiah's presence to include their eternal life with the "God of the living" and with Abraham. In the Lucan writings there is a remarkable unity and consistency of presentation of this fulfillment to which the scriptures point.

The Fourth Evangelist writes also in terms of fulfillment of Israel's traditions in Jesus Christ. His interpretation of the Abraham traditions, however, appear to reflect more closely the apocalyptic and midrashic theology representative of Palestinian rabbinic thought. His cultic interest is also quite pronounced. For the Fourth Evangelist Abraham, like Moses and Isaiah and John the Baptist, is a witness to the Christ, and his ancient reception of the divine messengers at Mamre is an example which his physical descendents fail to follow. More clearly than in any other gospel the Abraham tradition is employed by the Fourth Evangelist in the interest of polemic. Underlying the complex Lamb of God symbolism in this gospel there appears to be an implicit Isaac typology, drawing upon the earlier associations of Isaac, the Jerusalem cult, and especially the Passover. John's bringing together of many diverse meanings of sacrifice had already been anticipated by Jewish reflection on the meaning of the binding of Isaac in Gen. 22. As he presents Jesus as Lamb of God, offered at the time of Passover for the sin of the world, he presents him as the fulfillment of the Jewish cult and implicitly shows that he is "greater than our father Isaac."

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has surveyed a large body of Jewish and Christian literature in terms of the understanding of a particular tradition, that concerning Abraham. The documents studied have ranged in date over the span of more than a millenium and reflect the thought of a wide variety of authors and religious communities.

Because Abraham stands at the beginning of the particular history of Israel with God, it is almost inevitable that in any age when the people sought to interpret their life and existence in relation to God they would draw from the stories connected with their origins. This we have seen to be in fact the case. The interpretation of the Abraham tradition is in a very real sense a mirror of the piety of particular Jewish and Christian communities in various ages. We have shown how the particular historical experiences of Jewish and Christian thinkers and communities have led them to take from the ancient tradition certain dimensions and to exploit them in terms of the central theological and historical realities of their own times.

Within the Israelite community it appears that the Abraham tradition was employed by the Davidic monarchy and priesthood to strengthen its claims as this new form of government and cult displaced the older amphictyony. At the major crisis of destruction of the state by the Babylonians and exile of the people, the Priestly writers found in the Abraham tradition an anchor for a guilty peoples' faith as an expression of the everlasting covenant of God's unmerited grace.

The contact of Judaism with Hellenism brought several refractions of the Abraham tradition. On the one hand, the conflicts with Hellenistic rulers brought to the fore an interpretation of Abraham's faithfulness in crises and his exemplary piety in every circumstance. These conflicts also made of the shadowy Isaac figure of the Old Testament a major hero, the prototype of the faithful Jew who willingly offers his life in faithfulness to God. Where the relationships with Hellenism were more congenial, on the other hand, Abraham's life received considerable attention also, but in terms of his wisdom and reason. He became a philosopher king who embodied all of the finest qualities of Greek culture. Within the period of Graeco-Roman civilization the Qumran community appears to have been the most successful of the Jewish communities in holding together the paradoxical relationship of grace and works in their interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant. In the other literature the major priestly emphasis on grace is largely overshadowed by interest in Abraham's meritorious life.

With the emergence of the Christian community there is reflected in its literature both a belief in the continuity of the church with Israel, and the tension and hostility in its relationship with Judaism. A study of the Abraham tradition in the gospels and Acts shows both of these dimensions. The Christian community used the Abraham tradition to show that its Messiah was the gracious fulfillment of the history of God's relationship with Israel which began with Abraham. The motif of fulfillment is dominant in these documents. At the same time, these documents use the Abraham tradition in varying degrees to underline their belief that most of the Jewish people had forfeited their Abrahamic heritage by their rejection of its fulfillment in Jesus. The Abrahamic tradition then became something of a focus of Jewish-Christian polemic in the latter part of the first century A. D.

There is within the literature surveyed in this dissertation an amazing variety of religious experiences. The study of the history of the Abraham tradition in this dissertation has sought to acknowledge the integrity of each body of literature in its expression of the faith of a religious community at specific periods of its life. Its concern has not been primarily to show background and parallels for New Testament interpretations. It has confirmed the conviction that a people's life is mirrored in its literature and that a living tradition is a changing and developing tradition. This study has shown how an ancient store of tradition was refracted in response to and in relationship to the significant historical experiences of a people. The Abraham tradition is particularly amenable to such a study in that its use in religious literatures transcends a single religious faith. While the study of this particular tradition has value in itself, it also sheds considerable light upon the nature and development of religious tradition in general and serves as a useful paradigm.

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